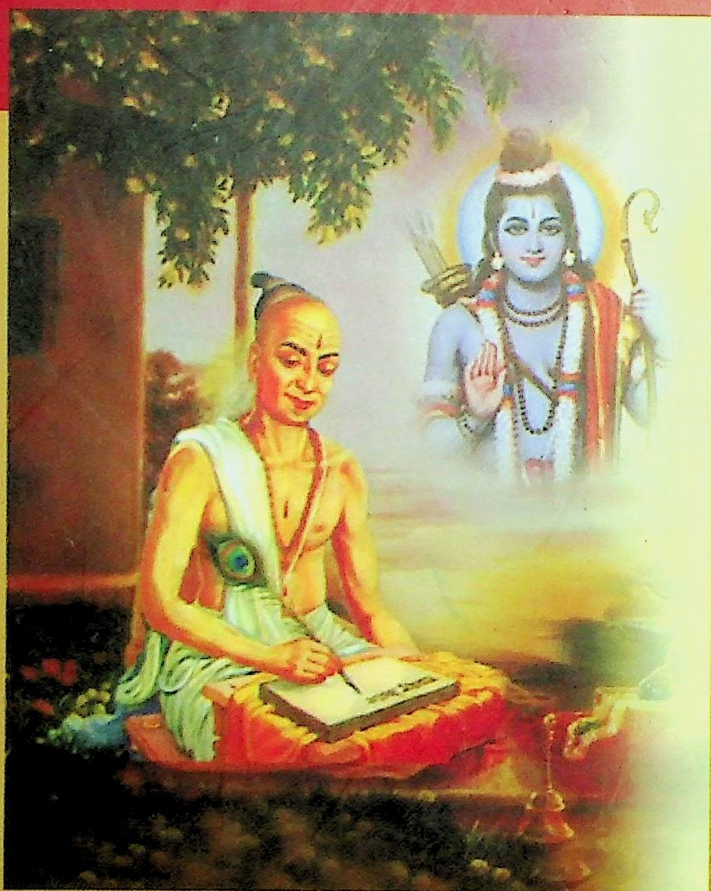


The Vinay Patrika

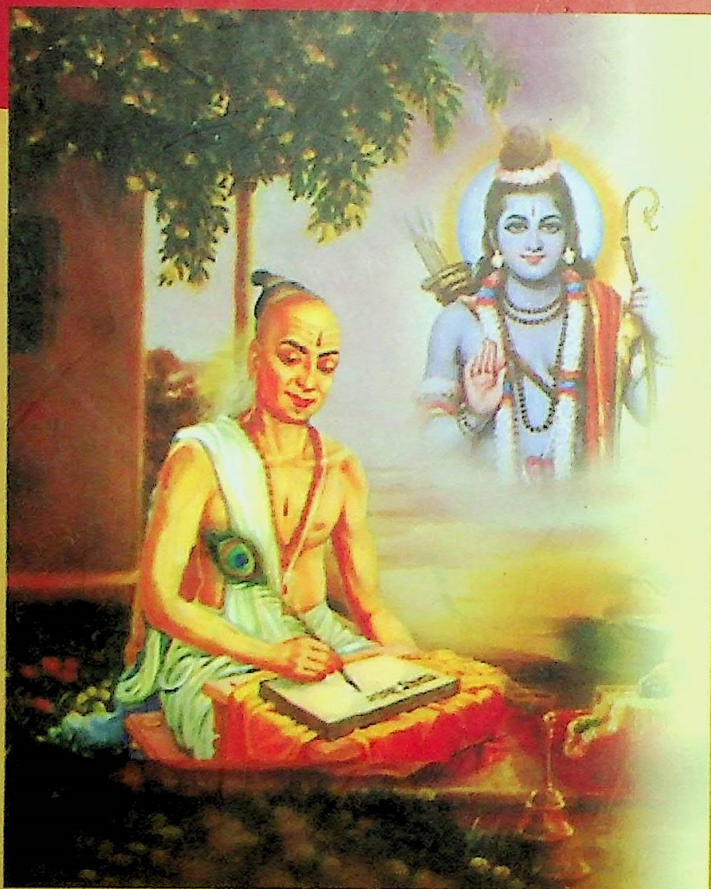
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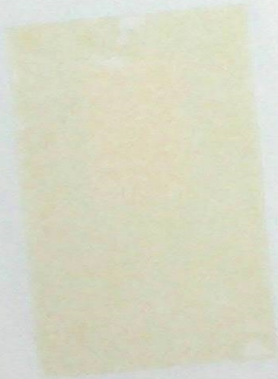
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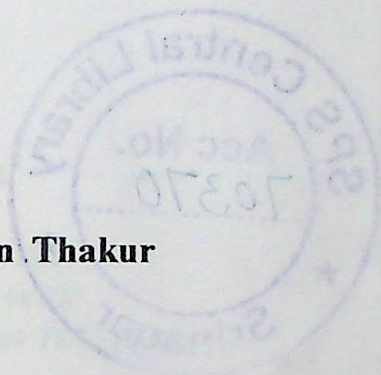


The Vinaya-Pitaka
An English Rendering



THE VINAYA PATRIKA AN ENGLISH RENDERING

Murari Madhusudan Thakur



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CONTENTS

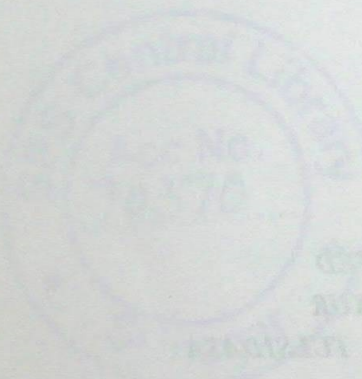
1. Introduction 9

2. The Family 14

3. Childhood 25

4. Notes on 104

IN MEMORIAM
MY FATHER
THE LATE LAMENTED
SRI PUSHKAR THAKUR
WHO TAUGHT ME TO READ TULSIDASA



WHO TAUGHT ME TO READ FIRST
SRI PUSHPA THAKUR
THE LATE FATHER
MY FATHER
BY MEMORIAM

BY
SRI PUSHPA THAKUR
THE LATE FATHER
MY FATHER
BY MEMORIAM

BY
SRI PUSHPA THAKUR
THE LATE FATHER
MY FATHER
BY MEMORIAM

BY
SRI PUSHPA THAKUR
THE LATE FATHER
MY FATHER
BY MEMORIAM

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	9
2. The Vinaya-Patrika	14
3. Glossary	273
4. Notes on the Text	304

CONTENTS

9	1. Introduction
11	2. The Vinyasa-Sutra
12	3. Glossary
14	4. Index on the text

INTRODUCTION

The Life of Tulsidasa

Like the life of his near contemporary William Shakespeare, very little is known of the life of Tulsidasa that can be based on historical evidence. That is why both have become the subject of legends and apocryphal stories.

However, we propose to present here a life-sketch of Tulsidasa, based on the views of Tulsidasa scholars and the internal evidence present in the poet's works, steering a middle course, and following what is most probable.

Tulsidasa was most probably born in AD 1532 in a brahman family in Rajapur in the Banda district in Uttar Pradesh. As he was born in an *abhuktamula nakshstra*, that is, an ill-omened conjunction of two asterisms, his parents abandoned him:

'My mother and father brought me into the world
and abandoned me, even the Creator Brahma did
not write anything good on my forehead: I was
low and pitiful, an object of contempt: like a
dog, I craved even for scraps of food thrown out.¹
'Even my mother and father as they gave birth to me,
Cast my body away
As though I'd been a wretched vermin!

...

It was my own misfortune that they shrank
Even from touching my very shadow.²

1. The Kavitavali VII.57

2. The Vinaya-patrika, 275

10 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

The boy 'Rambola'¹ had to beg for his livelihood till his early youth². That was how he came into contact with beggars, tramps, outcastes and ascetics, men of all sorts along the road from Rajapur to larger centres up north. One of these was a learned and versatile monk called Naraharidasa, who later came to be his guru. According to George Grierson, this Naraharidasa was eighth in a direct line of succession from the famous teacher Ramananda. It was from Naraharidasa that the young man first learnt the story of Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, the first among poets.

Rambola was given the name 'Tulsidasa' at his initiation into the *Visistadvaita* Order of Sanyasis, founded by the South Indian Acharya, Ramanuja.

Of the middle years of the poet's youth before he became Tulsidasa, we know even less than what we know of his birth and early boyhood. However, tradition has it that that he was married to one Ratnavali, daughter of a brahman family, and lived for a time in great marital bliss with his wife.³ It is believed that he was deeply in love with the beautiful Ratnavali, and once, when the young woman had left for her parents' place in his absence, he rushed to meet her there as soon as he found her missing, abandoning all conventional forms, travelling by night and braving all manner of hardship on the way. The newly married Ratnavali, in a violent fit of vexation at this unceremonious arrival, chided him for his inordinate love of the body, and bade him seek the love of God. The woman's words, sharp and biting, went home, and the young man decided then and there to renounce worldly life. Once again, he set out alone, visiting pilgrim places connected with the Rama story,

1. The Vinaya-Patrika, 76.1

2. The Hanumanbahuka XXIX

3. The Hanumanbahuka, XL

"The *Bhakta Mala* commentary has a story of his wife; and in the traditional material deriving from Soron, or Sukarkhet, there are numerous dats". (F.R. allchin, Introduction to *Petition to Ram*, p. 32)

such as Chitrakuta, and Ayodhya as well as Varanasi, wandering all over north India.

Of Tulsidasa's education too, we know very little. In the opening introductory verses of the *Ramacharitamanasa*, the poet tells us that he has drawn upon many Puranas and other sacred texts, and upon the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. He also tells us that he first heard the story of Rama in Sukarkhet, that at first he did not understand it, in his childishness, but after his teacher repeated it time on time, he began to understand.

There is a reference in the *Gautamchandrika* by Krishnadatta to Tulsidasa's coming to Banaras, the city "which was to be his home for many years and where he was to die." One of his earliest poems, the *Ramajna-prasna*, bears a date, Samvat 1621, i.e., AD 1564, which mentions one Gangarama, a resident of Banaras and a member of the poet's circle there. We may therefore infer that Tulsidasa visited Banaras in AD 1564.

A decade later, AD 1574, on the *Ramanavami* day of Samvat 1631, the traditional birth anniversary of Rama, i.e., the ninth day of Chaitra, at a location known now as Tulsichaura in Ayodhya, the birth-place of Rama, Tulsidasa, at the age of fortytwo, launched his *magnum opus*, the *Ramacharitamanasa*, for which he is most celebrated, and for which George Grierson (many years ago) claimed "at least ninety million" adherents, or people who "acknowledge Tulsi as their guide".

After the completion of the *Ramacharitamanasa*, two years and seven months later according to popular tradition, Tulsidasa's fame spread far and wide. Todar Mal and Abdur Rahim Khänkhänän the poet came to be among his friends, and Raja Man Singh and other statesmen and princes of the time used to visit him. His contemporary Nabhadasa in his poem the *Bhaktamäla* paid him what is perhaps the highest tribute to Tulsidasa around this time, saying that Valmiki has been born again as Tulsidasa:

12 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

'For the liberation of beings in this perverse *Kali-yuga*,

Valmiki has become Tulsi;

In the former Treta age he made the *Ramayana* in a million verses,

...

Now he has again published abroad the lord's many wonders for the comfort of all devotees:

For the liberation of beings in this perverse *Kali-yuga*, Valmiki has become Tulsi.

Tulsidasa acknowledged the rare compliment from a contemporary in his own characteristic vein of humility:

'Through the glory and power of Rama's Name,
Even a wretched one like Tulsi is likened to the great sage Valmiki!'

Other contemporary poets also paid homage to his supremacy, including Rahim and Raskhan.

There are various poems from these middle years of Tulsidasa's life, mainly poems of one genre, the *padavali* or string of *padas* designed for singing, or setting to music, the *Gitavali*, the *Krishna Gitavali* and the *Vinaya-patrikā*.

As for the likeness of the poet, there are several traditionally accepted portraits from Banaras, one series of his comparative youth and another of his age. One of his disciples, the poet of the *Prema Ramayana* in Sanskrit, described him:

'He is fair-skinned, when he hears even the syllable Ra (of Rama's Name) his flesh thrills and his hair stands on end, on his breast is a necklace of Tulsi beads, he wears a loin-cloth, and time on time in a deep voice he repeats the line, 'Then Bharata stood (*Gitavali*, II. 70).'

While the poet was growing famous, the Saiva pandits of Banaras tried to bring him down. Jealous of his growing celebrity, they tried to persecute him in many ways: all kinds of disparaging and malicious stories were floated

about his caste, parentage and his way of life. The city administration was loose during the time and Banaras was infested with burglars. The poet too fell a victim to them once.

During his last years, two events cast their long shadows over Banaras, bringing disease and pestilence to the population at large and to the ageing poet. There were the *Rudrabisi* (the twenty-year cycle of Rudra, Samvat 1656-1676) and the conjunction of Saturn with Pisces in Samvat 1669 (AD 1612). In the year AD 1616, pestilence broke out in Banaras again and the poet's health seems to have broken. His last poems contain a number of references to physical infirmity. To this period belong the *Kavitavali*, the *Dohavali*, and the *Hanumanbahuka*.

In AD 1607, Tulsidasa had a severe pain in the arms, and his whole body started festering with terrible sores and boils. In spite of medicines, incantations and charms of all kinds, it grew worse and worse. In sheer anguish and despair, Tulsidasa started praying once again to Hanuman for recovery, the record of which is available to us in the fortyfour stanzas of the *Hanumanbahuka*. This, it is said, stilled his suffering. He lived in peace, a life of retirement thereafter for a number of years.

The year of the poet's death is generally accepted; there is a traditional couplet known from several variants, which gives the year as 1680 Samvat, A.D. 1623, the day and month varying slightly. One version recorded in the *Mula Gosain Charita* corresponds with the day celebrated even today by the descendants of Todar Mal, his friend in Banaras, while another makes a pun on the scene, Asi ghat, and his age, assi. It is also believed that the poet himself composed the couplet when he knew that his death was in the offing.

Whatever may be the historical truth, Tulsidasa died in AD 1623 at Asi ghat in old Banaras, as full of days as of glory and renown.

The Vinaya-Patrika

Its Character and Contents

Like most of Tulsidasa's later writings, the *Vinaya-Patrika* cannot be dated with precision. However, it may be said, on stylistic and internal evidence that it came later than *Ramacharitamanasa*, and Tulsidasa was already in old age when he wrote it.¹ *Vinaya-Patrika* as a work is very different from *Ramacharitamanasa* : While the latter is a narrative poem designed for recitation, the *Vinaya-Patrika* is a collection of *padas* or song-verses, each conceived as an independent text. Tulsidasa's great epic was in Avadhi, while for the *Vinaya-patrika*, the poet chose the dialect of Braja. The work employs a wide vocabulary including many Sanskrit words in their *tatsama* form, many more in their *tadbhava* or Hindi forms as well as a selection of Persian and Arabic loan-words and of rural dialect words. As one authority puts it, "Tulsi never followed the language, but rather language followed him.

The *Vinaya-Patrika* consists of 279 separate *padas* or hymns. These may further be divided into three major parts. From the opening hymn to Ganesha, to the Sixty fourth hymn to Rama are a prologue of *stotras*, hymns of praise, an ancient well known genre. Numbers Sixty-five to 276 form the main body of the *Vinaya-Patrika*, while the final three, 277 to 279, form a small but significant epilogue.

Each of the 'letters' in the main body of the work embodies a single and precise spiritual experience. In most cases, the experience is intense, urgent and direct. They also reveal the nature of Tulsidasa's poetic genius : he was

1. 'Life's end is very near', V-p. 273

one of the poets who go on developing to the end of their careers. The critic in him is ever vigilant. In his monumental epic, the *Ramacharitamanasa*, he may be seen trying himself out; the *Vinaya Patrika* is a far cry from his earlier achievements in technique as well as experience. As he advances in years, his poetry grows bare and austere in style, rich and mature in experience. The mature agony, the deep spiritual anguish expressed in some of these *padas* is a thing of rare intensity, not only in all Tulsidasa, but in all poetry of this kind. Another aspect of this dynamic process is also revealed here in these poems, what may be called 'the purification.' The great poet, as T.S. Eliot pointed out, in writing himself, writes his time. Thus Tulsidasa, hardly knowing it himself, became the voice of sixteenth Century Hindu India. The muddled polytheism, and deism of the day, and the reaction against the impact of an alien culture do have their bearing on his poetry; the personal spleens he happened to develop may sometimes jar on the modern day reader among whom he is not read as much as he should be. It is hard to put up with his frequent allusions to scripture and mythology. Indeed his earlier works betray a touch of conventionalism. Perhaps even the *Ramacharitamanasa* does. The *Vinaya Patrika*, barring the prologue of Sanskritized hymns and prayers set down in the traditional manner, is devoid of all such touches. Yet we must remember that Tulsidasa, being a child of his age, did belong to a particular religious order of sannyasis within the Tradition, an order and a sect which has a well developed philosophy and theology behind it—Visistadvaita and yet, his poetry though coloured by it, has no touch of sectarianism; it has instead the direct and universal appeal that distinguishes the great poet. This is owing to the inner process of growth which I have tentatively called 'the purification'. This alone can explain the essential paradox of his art: under the pressure of direct religious experience, the white heat of intensity, all extraneous matter is precipitated, leaving a clear bright

16/ *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

crystal of pure poetry above. In these devotional *padas*, this process may be seen being openly enacted. He is occupied with the struggle which, as Eliot said, alone constitutes life for a poet—to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal. In poem after poem, most of five, sometimes even of four and a halfline, moments of a great yet human life are masterfully seized and made permanent in all their dignity and anguish. And yet nowhere else is the appeal simpler, more direct, more universal. As in all great poetry, the words here are irreplaceable, their order inevitable, their very ring and rhythm reverberating with the sharp intensity of experience that has forced them out:

O Lord, my mind does not give up its obstinate insistence:

That is how one classic piece opens :

Night and day, my Master, I teach it in many ways

But it still acts according to its own nature,

Like to the young woman who experiences excruciating labour pains,

And yet the stupid one consents to her husband,

Forgetting the anguish, and becoming agreeable to him,
the Vile one,¹

Here is a moment of experience seized at the height of intensity and made permanent in all its nobility and helplessness, its direct personal contact and abstraction. Indeed, it is this power to organize experience that lies behind the powerfully evocative image of the young woman in travail. One remembers how Rilke, the German poet, wrote of the experiences and memories one must have in order to write poetry:

...There must be memories of many nights of love,
each unlike the other, of the screams of women in labour...

1. V-p, 89

And still, as he says, it is not yet enough to have memories:

...only when they have turned to blood within us,
to glance and gesture nameless and no longer to
be distinguished from ourselves—only then it can
happen that in a most rare hour the first word of
a poem arises in their midst and goes from them.¹

Tulsidasa's image is a perfect instance in point. It shows how deep the memory has matured within, how complete is the realization in poetry, of the poet's experience. Here is an intensely human situation realized in what is its essential significance for the poet. the image in its powerful appeal to the senses and its correspondence to the poet's spiritual experience is something of an achievement.

The elemental passion and restlessness of creative energy find incomparably beautiful expressions in these powerful 'letters'. All that has been felt on the pulse is transmuted into perfect rhythmic and image patterns, permanent records of rich significant experience. The poet's life itself is a case of transformation : an intensely passionate young man in love with his wife, Tulsidasa has a scene with her after he has followed his truant lady to her father's place; the sharp, starkly disillusioning words of his wife turn him towards a dim new direction. It is a path of gloom lit up only by an intense longing for, a seeking after the divine. There is hardly any thing miraculous about this turn around the corner; many a future saint has stumbled upon it in his path. the beautiful young woman had been touched for a few moments with the divine spark: the shock of disenchantment worked like a treatment of electrotherapy. Now onwards, for Tulsidasa, It is to be a life of dedication, of ceaseless striving for love everlasting, love that transcends the bonds of the flesh, even of time and space. The loving soul, completely disenchanted, now seeks feverishly for a life of the spirit. The great upheaval within forces open a

1. The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge P.26-27, by Rainer Maria Rilke

new chapter in the story of his life. He finds himself in a strange land where the callings of the world fade far away like dying echoes; another land he was only dimly aware of has moved into close perception; a resolve and a vow follow in the wake:

So long I've wasted my time, now no more!

Through Rama's grace, the night of existence has passed
Now that I'm awake, I'll make my bed no more!

It is reinforced not by rhetoric, but by the maturity of
Knowing me to be under the power of others, the
sense-objects,

These sense-organs of mine mocked at me so long,
Now that I am my own master, I'll not be laughed at.¹

A vision has dawned upon him : all earthly bliss is passing. Where then is the happiness that abides? He does not know yet, he admits it soon enough, yet he would look at the grim reality revealed to him steadily; he would not shirk it even though he may have to wear himself out in this bleak adventure of the spirit, into the unknown. He has the true humility of the saint, yet it is with the pride and fortitude of a conqueror that he prepares himself for the gathering storm:

I'll not be laughed at.

The deep self-introspective quality of these *padas* is made evident by the large group of pieces opening with an address to the mind or the heart. Personal though these are, it is through them that he reveals his insight into the permanent springs of human action. In these records of his own experiences, his passions and pains, his yearnings and frustrations, his agonies and conflicts, it is invariably common human nature and its normal natural rhythm that he catches. In deep sympathy as he is with the suffering world, it is invariably the essential human being subject to the infinite

1. V-p, 105

cravings and baits of the flesh and the world that is revealed in his purest poems. As we read the *Vinaya-Patrika* we seem to be following an acute and original mind, a mind of the first order, in its many-coloured adventures into the realms of the spirit for the permanent and abiding in life. As poetry, the *Vinaya-Patrika*, a mature poet's supreme endeavour at self-revelation through prayers in the form of letter to his lord, has an astonishingly wide a variety of rhythms, tones, moods and attitudes marked by native vigour and independence, unconventionality and originality. In his power to quicken, control and enlarge our sympathies, Tulsidasa stands out as one of the world's great poets, for it is against personal appetites, the appetites indeed of "nice ordinary unregenerate" people as Aldous Huxley calls them, that he pits himself. He is ever struggling for an essential regeneration of the life-force within, for higher scales of being, for what Bernard Shaw called the Evolutionary appetite. Never does he seem to win this battle yet his very awareness of this disease of existence, as he calls it, the filth, the follies, the futility of his mind or heart, is a sure sign of spiritual health and vitality, his purity and wisdom. What is more, this awareness is too intense to let him be smug; it kindles his whole consciousness aflame with the desire for recovery and grace, for wholeness and peace. His constant humility is akin to the humility of Jesus himself.

The lyrical quality of this series of devotional poems is unique in the entire range of Hindi verse, ancient and modern. An unequalled mastery over common poetic devices such as inner and end rhymes, assonance and alliteration, enables the poet to hold the reader by the sheer music of the lines. The internal rhymes are often times coordinated with the rhythm of the lines to achieve sound effects that must be called unusual¹. As the intensity of feeling rises, the very movement of the lines takes on a deep solemnity, the

1. As a boy, I have myself heard several of his *padas* sung at chitrakuta in a small devotional gathering to a wonderful effect, and it remains a vivid memory even half a century later, quite unforgettable.

20 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

syllables are reduced and the poetry grows greatly simple: struggling with the sickness within, his spirits are weighed down and his soul's weariness find a direct echo in the rhythm. It is primarily owing to this highly individual and essential quality of music that this is of all poetry the most untranslatable. Each poem is set in a particular *raga*, and can be sung in the classical style : There are twenty-three *ragas* mentioned in the printed text. The poet has a thorough knowledge not only of metre and all traditional forms, but of Indian classical music as well as of composition. The repetition of themes in different *ragas* suggests that Tulsidasa was not only writing verse, but composing at the same time. His intense love of music, his sustained interest in it from his early days, his practice of holding musical gatherings in Banaras in later life, all go to strengthen the conjecture that he gave his time to composing too. With the very first flush of genius, he employed his knowledge of musical forms most fruitfully indeed, giving Hindi some of its most incomparable songs. Quite a few of these immortal songs are not only engraved in the memory of the lay public of the Hindi region of India, but are diffused in the world of Hindustani music, and are sung to this day.¹ After over four centuries of being set down, they delight the music-loving north Indian, whether Hindu or Muslim. Great and deeply moving as this music is, its appeal knows no distinctions of faith, creed or sect. Verily, were Jesus to read these songs or hear them sung, he would not say what a modern poet makes him say :

None reached, he said, the depths of spirit
David touched, nor built a surer rock
of song to climb upon.

1. When I wrote these lines years ago, comparing Tulsidasa with David. I was not aware that the Hindi litterateur, the late Viyogi Hari, had commented : "In the west, the Psalms of David are thought to be incomparable, but if people could read *Vinaya-Patrika*...they would forget the psalms of David."

For, here for once are reached the depths of spirit David touched; here is built a rock of song that is as sure at any rate as the deathless Psalms. In fact, the parallel between the two holds good in more than one sense; it goes deep into their essential spirit¹. Tulsidasa, like the singer of the exquisite Psalms, is a great sensualist. Intensely aware of the joys of the senses, of the exultations of youth, he is agonized by the tragic fact that all this love is fragile and fleeting. Without the awakening of Divine Love life remains a mere paltry thing, a silly game, as it were. Singing of the lord's lovingkindness, of how wonderfully well He knows all the ways of love, the poet reaches a point of intensity where he cannot help breaking into what is perhaps the most exquisite lament in the poetry of sensualism :

O Tulsidasa, even on seeing Rama's noble ways and
His love,

If the sense of devotion to Him arises not in the heart,
Then his poor stupid mother simply wasted her youth,
In giving birth to him!

Like Job of old, Tulsidasa sees man as one that cometh
forth

Like a flower, and is cut down...

and he questions : why did the bud flower at all? It is no mere rhetorical question with him, since with his sharp sense of the physical, he cannot help feeling the parting of youth, the ruthless wrenching away of something to which the heart clings desperately, the intense torment of the body without which no human child is born. Why should the body be born at all if it is condemned to suffer as well as make others suffer? The poet's personal question takes on a universal significance, beating against our consciousness like waves against the shore, insistent with a rhythm. If the bud is to flower at all, it must blossom forth into an undying

1. V-p, 164

22 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

bloom, and the poet has at last found it in the timeless pattern of beauty that he has created in the love of Rama.

The burning aspiration for a life of the spirit expresses itself in a number of impulses acting at one and the same time. As they are resolved into unity, the whole effect is to bring about an integration of personality occurring as a result of centring oneself upon a number of separate objects. Desires and longings are accepted, not denied, as they come to the body and make the mind and heart restless, yet the inward vision is for ever seeking for timeless beauty. Let the heart remain anguished for ever, but the seeker within would be stilled by nothing short of the highest.

In these powerful evocations of his most intense religious experiences, Tulsidasa voices some of the deepest aspirations of Man. We may hear in these *Padas* "the cry of generations of sensualists maimed by the futility of earthly love that they may become whole again." Integrating and re-integrating, it is the poetry of religion at its most magnificent.

70370

The Praise of Ganesha

1

Sing the praise of Ganapati, the world's adored,
Shankar's son, Bhavani's child in whom she delights,
Home of powers miraculous, the elephant-faced one,
Who takes all hurdles away,
Ocean of grace, handsome, capable of all things,
Lover of modaka-sweets, giver of joy, of all that's
good,
You sea of learning,
Giver of intellect,
With hands joined together asks Tulsidasa,
Let Sita and Rama dwell in my heart.

The Praise of Surya

2

O bright-rayed god, O Sun,
You're full of compassion for the wretched,
Sages, men, gods and demons serve you;
You lion to the elephant of frost and darkness,
Wreathed by rays, you are like fire
To burn down all impurities, evils, sorrows, diseases:
You bring to light the bird chakravaka and his mate,
Make the lotuses bloom,
Light up the world itself,
You are the mass of splendour, radiance, light,
The sum of form and the very essence of life.
You ride a splendid shining chariot,
With a cripple for a charioteer.
You, lord, are the very image of Brahma, Vishnu,
Shiva.

The Veda and the Puran as bring to light your fame,
Tulsidasa begs of you the boon of devotion to Rama.

The Praise of Shiva

3

Whom else to beg from, if not Shiva?
Full of compassion fo the wretched,
Dispeller of your devotees' afflictions,
You, blessed lord, are capable in all ways:
When gods and demons all burnt
In the deadly fury of the fire of the poison, *Kalakuta*,
You drank it to keep your pledge to your devotees.
When the terrible demon, *Tripura*
Brought sorrows on the world you struck him down
With one single arrow;
That state which saints, the Veda and all the Puranas
Speak of as hard-to-win, even by great sages,
That freedom eternal Shiva gives to all alike
In his city to those who die there.
Easy of access to serve, you noble wishing-tree,
The lord of *Parvati*, supremely gentle and gracious,
You home of grace, the Love god's enemy,
Bestow on Tulsidasa the love for Rama's feet.

4

There's no one as bounteous as Shankar.
Full of compassion for the wretched,
He loves only giving, ever fond of suppliants;
Who struck down the Love-god—
the first among warriors—
And set him up in the world again.
How can I ever tell

Of such a lord's being pleased and showing favour?
 That state which sages are diffident to ask him
 Even after performing a million yogas,
 That liberation is reached even by insects and moths,
 In Shiva's city, as is well-known in the Veda.
 Those who abandon Uma's noble lord to go begging
 elsewhere,
 Tulsidasa calls them foolish beggars,
 Who will never have enough to fill their bellies.

5

'O Bhavani! your lord is mad.
 A great giver, he gives every day even to the
 undeserving—
 To those who've never given—
 He has violated the greatness of the Veda.
 O Bhavani, look to the good of your own house,
 For you are most wise.
 Looking on the riches given away by Shiva,
 "Even Lakshmi and Sarasvati grow envious.
 Paupers on whose foreheads my writing ordained
 No sign of pleasure or comfort in life,
 Even for them, thanks to your lord,
 I've grown sick and tired preparing a heaven!
 Their misery and wretchedness themselves are
 sorrowing,
 Beggary itself is in agony!
 Let someone else take over from me this
 responsibility:
 Now I know begging to be preferable!
 Hearing the creator Brahma's chosen words,
 Full of love, praise, petition and irony,
 Mahesha was pleased at heart, says Tulsidasa,
 And the world's Mother smiled.

26 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

6

Beg the lord of Girija in whose home in Kasi
 The eight Powers miraculous serve as maids.
 Shiva is a capricious giver and again,
 Only a little service melts him;
 He cannot bear the sight of the wretched
 With their hands joined before him.
 Serving him, pleasure, riches, intellect,
 liberation, all come easily.
 Whoever in his affliction went to him for refuge,
 He was received and fulfilled by him
 In a single instant, with his glance.
 The beggar Tulsidasa sings his renown
 To gain pure devotion for Raghu's lord.

7

How is't you do not melt,
 O lord of Uma, for this wretched one,
 O you mine of compassion,
 O dispeller of calamity terrible?
 The Veda and the Puranas speak of you as the
 bountiful one,
 How is't you've turned miserly in my case?
 What was the devotion the brahman Gunanidhi
 performed
 That you were pleased to give him your own supreme
 place?
 The state that even great sages sing as well-nigh
 unattainable,
 Even moths and insects of your city secure:
 O you enemy of the Love-god, give then to Tulsidasa,
 The love for Rama's feet, and banish all
 The divisiveness and discords of his mind.

8

O Shankar, you are great god, a great giver,
 Your innocence is great too!
 You drove away the sorrows of all those
 Who joined their hands before you in supplication.
 He who serves, remembers and worships you
 With but a few leaves or grains of rice,
 On him you bestow all the pleasures and comforts
 of this world—
 Horses, elephants and chariots all.
 O Vamadeva, dwelling in your city,
 Never have I made an entreaty till today,
 Yet am I tormented now by material troubles
 Brought on by these your servants.
 Call them quickly then,
 Stop their harsh doings,
 For, these stupid cruel ones want
 To crush this Tulsi plant, to plant *Sahor* bushes
 instead.

9

O Shiva, be good to us, please let your compassion
 work.
 Full of compassion, your fame spread far and wide,
 I give myself in offering to you, do take away your
Maya.
 Lotus-eyed, home of virtues, the Love-god's enemy,
 Your greatness and glory none can plumb.
 Without your favour, the love of Rama's feet,
 It cannot even be dreamed of.
 Sages, saints and *Siddhas*, men, *danujas* and gods,
 Whatsoever other beings there are in the universe,
 Turned away from devotion to your feet,
 None may cross over the ocean of existence

28 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Even though a million aeons may pass
 Adorned with snakes, O you servant of Dusan's
 foe, Rama,
 Lord of gods, enemy of the demon Tripura,
 Sun to the frost and fog of delusion,
 Dispeller of the fear and grief of those who seek
 your refuge,
 O you swan in the lake of Parvati's consciousness,
 Lord of Kashi, dwelling in burning-ghats and places
 of cremation,
 Bestow on Tulsidasa the boon of imperishable
 devotion
 To Hari's lotus-feet.

10

Lord, sun to the darkness of delusion, O Hara! O
 Rudra! O Shankar!
 My refuge, driving away fear and grief,
 O the beautiful one in whom the world delights,
 The two-day young moon on your forehead,
 Wide are your lotus eyes, the very home of beauty,
 Like a million Love-gods in one,
 The glow of your form fair as the moon, the conch-
 shell,
 Fair as the flower kunda and camphor,
 Your body shining with myriads of the newly-risen
 sun,
 Every limb of your body smeared with ashes,
 Half your body is the daughter of the mountain,
 Parvati,
 Garlanded with snakes and skulls,
 Your diadem a matted hairknot glowing
 With the Ganga's waters made holy with Hari's feet,
 With rings on ears, poison in your throat, the root
 of compassion,

Being-Consciousness-Bliss in one, O ascetic, I praise you.

In your hands, the trident, arrows, bow and sword,
Fire to the forest of your foes, riding the bull,
Clothed in skins of elephant and tiger, condensed
with knowledge,

You're served by saints, gods, men and sages.

As you dance your Tandava dance, you play the drum,

And though you look terrible,

You're the mass of all that's good and auspicious.

At Creation's close, you burn it all down, consuming it;

Your palace is in Kailas and your throne in Kasi,
Knower of Truth, omniscient, lord of all sacrifices,
Omnipresent, O you enemy of Tripura, this whole
has sprung from you

Brahma, Indra, the sun and moon, Varuna and Agni,
The eight Vasus, the fortynine Maruts and Yama
himself

Attained their powers from serving and worshipping you.

Partless, without attributes and qualities, stainless,
You're the supreme Brahman Himself, single in
action,

Unborn, changeless, the whole universe is your form.
Though terrible, yet benign, lord of gods,
omnipresent,

All-in-all and good to all beings,

O Shiva, whosoever you favour, to him knowledge,
dispassion,

Dharma and wealth, the bliss of the final union with
Divine,

All do come naturally to him.

30 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Even so, deluded as they are, men turn to worldly
ways,
Wandering through many births in the cycle of
creation;
O Shiva, O you enemy of the Love-god,
Tulsidasa, demented, most low, deep in affliction
comes to you
For refuge, give him, O foe of Love-god, undying
devotion
To Rama's lotus-feet, with *Maya's* divisiveness all
spent.

The Praise of Shiva as Bhairava

11

Lord, O Bhairava of terrible form, you're fearsome
indeed.
Lord of *ganas* and the dead, of spirits and goblins
all,
You are dispeller of calamities.
Cat to the mouse of delusion, you banish the fears
of existence,
You're both boat and boatman for this ocean of
existence.
Peerless in strength, immense in span, pale-bodied,
spotless,
Brilliantly white like the world-bearing Sheshanaga
On your head is a tawny matted topknot
With a glowing brilliance like ten million lightning-
flashes.
Over your head the waters of the holy Ganga, river
of the gods,
Glisten like a lovely wreath of strange elegance
While on your handsome forehead glows the nascent
moon—



I adore you, O Hara, the friend of Kubera.
 The moon, the sun and Agni are your eyes;
 You've vanquished the Love-god, O you home of
 virtues and knowledge.
 You delight in Girija, you dwell on the lord of
 mountains, Kailas;
 With rings in your ears, your visage is lovely without
 compare.
 Armed with shield, sword and trident, in your hands
 the tiny drum,
 With bow and arrows, your vehicle the lord of bulls,
 O store of compassion;
 When gods and demons burned, the world of men
 sore afflicted,
 With your tender consciousness, O unconquerable,
 you drank the poison.
 Ashes are your adornment, tiger-skin your raiment,
 While on your breast you wear a garland of snakes
 and skulls.
 You're the dispeller of great sins, you break the
 spells
 Of Dakini and Shakini, of evil spirits earth-bound
 and flying.
 You live beyond the pale of time, you the serpent-
 eagle
 To the snakes of the Kali-age, slaying Tripura, doing
 colossal deeds.
 Your're the end of the creation, dancing unmanifest,
 goading
 The elephants of the four quarters with your trident.
 O Lord, I have no saviour as I wander through the
 cycle of births,
 Wretched with the awful massed evil and misery of
 this world,
 O Bhairava of terrible form, O Rudra in the form of
 Rama,

32 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

You're my teacher, friend, father, mother, and maker,
 all,
 Save me, O my lord, the lord whose praise is sung
 by the Veda,
 By the sage Narada and the other celibates, by
 Sharada and Shesha,
 He who takes away his devotee's fear, the lord of
 all,
 Tulsidasa salutes the Lord Shiva dwelling ever in
 Kasi, the forest of bliss.

12

Ever Shankar, giver of the good, giver of joy to the
 pure in heart
 Lord of the mountain's daughter, most delightful,
 Deliverer from the delusion of the Love-god, lotus-
 eyed,
 Him I adore who is reached through pure loving
 devotion.
 Shiva, fair as the conch-shell, the flower kunda, the
 moon, camphor,
 Lovely is he, the root of Being-Consciousness-Bliss,
 Whose lotus-feet are worshipped by *Siddhas*, Sanak,
 Sanandan and all
 By great yogis, by Brahma, Vishnu and the gods
 themselves.
 Loved by the brahman clans, easy of access yet most
 inaccessible,
 Lord, fearsome-looking, beyond the Veda,
 The bearer of both the Ganga and the poison, pure,
 beyond *gunas*,
 I bow down to the home of compassion, to Shiva,
 the immutable.
 Lord of the worlds, uprooting sorrow and anguish,
 trident-armed,

Great sun to the darkness of delusion, death even
to death,
Hara, timeless and unaging, fire to the forest
of this hard age of Kali, knower of Truth, omniscient,
Like the pitcher-born Agastya for the ocean of
ignorance,
Immanent, the root of all that's good and auspicious,
Shattering all fear, delighting the devotee who bows
to him,
Shiva, the good refuge of Tulsidasa.

13

Serve the dust off Shiva's lotus-feet,
The wish-granting Cow that brings all good fortune.
White as camphor, in compassion magnanimous,
The very essence of this existence in flux.
With the lord of serpents for a garland,
Shiva, the birth-land of joy, with glories beyond
measure,
Without qualities, yet the lord of all quality, formless,
The great lord, three-eyed, the Love-god's
conqueror,
The risen sun to the fogs and mists of egotism.
On your forehead shines the young moon,
The lord of *ganas*, you take away the three world's
woes,
The refuge of all those for whom
The creator Brahma has ordained no liberation,
Their way is through the grace of the lord of Kashi
There's no one who works for others like him:
When gods and demons burned, he drank the poison.
Go on making many an endeavour through ages,
Yet there's no true discrimination without Shambhu's
grace.

34 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

The Palace of all true wisdom is the one who delights
in Parvati.

Says Tulsidasa, lord, calm down my terror of
existence.

14

Look, look, O Uma's beloved, today you've become
a forest,

And she, as though the season of spring come to
visit you!

Her body's splendour is like a garland of champaka
flowers,

Her choice green robe like fresh tamal leaves,

Her thighs the banana tree, her feet like red lotuses,

Her waist suggests the lion's, her gait recalls the
swan's.

Her ornaments are like many flowers of various
hues,

Her bracelets and anklets like chirping birds,

Her hands are like newly-sprung buds of mango
and bakul,

Her breasts like bel fruits, her bodice a mesh of
creepers,

Her face like a lotus, her eyebrows humming bees,

Like large fresh blue lotuses are her eyes,

Her voice is a pik-bird, her movements like peacocks
and parrots lovely,

Her laughter is like white flowers and her sport the
gentle breeze.

Says Tulsidasa, listen of gentle gracious Shiva,

The five-arrowed Love-god, dwelling in my heart,

Has worked his mischief within me.

Bestow your grace and take away the network of
lust's delusion,

So that in my heart may dwell instead,

Rama, the heaped mass of happiness.

The Praise of the Mother-Goddess

15

Have compassion, Goddess, destroyer of insufferable
evil and woes,

O you root of the universe, ever favourable to your
people.

Bearing the spear and arrow, O great primal *Maya*,
All the lovely limbs of your body shine like lightning-
flashes,

Adorned by shining clothes, by splendid ornaments,
Your eyes like those of the young deer and wagtail,
Your moon-face puts to shame myriads of Love-
gods and Ratis,

You're the very boundary of beauty, goodness, grace
and joy,

You are terrible to the evil-doers,

Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, Parvati, Shiva's
spouse,

You're the goddess of superior wisdom too,

Mother of the six-headed Kartikeya, Ganesha, Mother
of the universe,

O Shiva's wife, O Bhavani, hail, all hail!

Breaker of Chanda's arms, the slayer of the demon
Mahisa,

You broke Munda's pride, tearing his limbs asunder,
A lioness in battle to the mad elephants, Sumbha
and Nisumbha,

You sank the hosts of enemies in the ocean of your
rage,

The Veda, the Puranas and Shesha himself with his
thousand tongues,

All sing your praises, yet cannot reach your virtues,
O Mother, bestow on Tulsidasa the vow of love and
thy rule,

36 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

That he may be like the rainbird Chataka to Rama,
the dark cloud.

16

Hail, hail Goddess, World-mother!
Gods and men, sages and demons all serve you.
O Kalika, give of joy and liberation, you take away
fear.
The home of pleasure, Powers and all that is good,
You're lovely with face like the full moon.
Your're a garland of the rays of the young sun
To all forms of darkness and anguish.
With shield, sword, trident, spear, bow and arrows,
You assume a terrible form in the battlefield,
Destroying the ranks of Danavas' demon-hordes.
You're the great net set for the birds and beasts
As though of evil spirits all, of Dakini and Shakini,
Hail, O wife of Mahesha, your name and forms are
many;
Mistress of all the worlds, daughter of the Himalayas,
O you protectress of those who bow down to you,
Bestow on Tulsidasa the supreme love for Raghupati,
With unswerving devotion to his feet,
Be gracious to receive him.

The Praise of the River Ganga

17

Hail, O daughter of Bhagirath, hail O Ganga!
Moon to the hosts of sages, chakor-birds,
Men, gods and Nagas all sing your praise,
O you daughter of Jahnu!
You sprang from Vishnu's lotus feet, and shine on
Shiva's head,

You flow as three streams, a mass of virtues,
 You wash way all sin.
 Your waters are pure, unfathomable and cool,
 They dispel all three forms of burning.
 Bearing lovely whirlpools and garland of choice
 wavelets,
 Adorned is your fair body with the gifts city-people
 bring
 For your worship, breaking the burden of existence,
 Like the flower-bed for the wishing-tree of devotion,
 You nourish and protect birds, beasts, creatures of
 the water,
 Ascetics and even insects, all alike, who live by you.
 O Kali to the Mahisa-demon of delusion,
 Bestow on Tulsidasa a mind that remembers Rama,
 the Raghu-warrior,
 As he wanders along your banks.

18

Hail, hail, O river of the gods, you who make the
 entire world holy!
 Your lovely waters flow like the pollen-dust of
 Vishnu's feet,
 You burn up all sorrows and make great, massive
 sins melt away.
 Your pure and holy waters, mixed with the dust off
 Hari's feet
 Fill Brahma's water-vessel and shine over Shiva's
 head.
 O You daughter of Jahnu, blessed are you, delivering
 Sagar's sixty thousand sons, piercing,
 Breaking open mountain valleys, you have many a
 name.
 The Yakshas, Gandharvas, Nagas, sages, Kinnars and
 Danujas,

38 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Demons and men all, bathing in your waters with
 their women,
 All acquire merit, O you stairway to heaven!
 You bestow both knowledge and wisdom,
 You are like a winter night to the lotus flowers,
 pride, lust, egotism,
 On your sweet banks green with Vanir reeds ranks
 growth,
 Between them flows your wide current, adorning
 the world,
 The bejewelled diadems of kings bow down to you,
 O you traveller along paths in three worlds.
 O you beloved one of Shiva, O Mother, dispel all
 afflictions,
 Be gracious and grant to Tulsidasa absolute devotion
 to Rama's feet.

19

Remembering you, O river of the gods,
 Sins and threefold fires are all banished.
 You make the world lovely, like some wishing-creeper
 Laden with fruits of pleasures and delights.
 Filled with sweet, life-giving elixir-like waters,
 Your body shines like the moon
 Your most pure wavelets, like the life and deeds of
 Rama,
 How lovely they look!
 Without you, O Mother of the world, O Ganga,
 What would we in this age of Kali do?
 how indeed would Tulsidasa cross over
 This awful ocean of existence?

20

O Ganga, you dwell on Lord Shiva's head,
 Adorning the three paths of earth, heaven, hell.

You bring the Good to gods and sages,
To Nagas, *Siddhas* and to good men.
Looking on you, all sorrows, all evil and sin,
All burnings and poverty are dispersed.
You calmed down the torment of Sagar's sons
With your waters, ever replenishing the ocean,
Filling Brahma's vessel, having risen from Vishnu's
feet,
Shining on Shiva's head, you take all three
To the very limits of glory and greatness.
Says Tulsidasa, make Tulsi's tongue
As pure and clear as your own waters!

The Praise of Yamuna

21

Just as Yamuna began to rise,
Just so did the warriors, Good Deeds,
Affront the King of the Kali-age
And begin to throw him out;
Just as her waters grow muddy with the flood,
Just so the faces of Yama's men are blackened,
So that they're left with nothing to do!
Says Tulsidasa, Yamuna's pure cloud of sinlessness
Burnt to ashes the Javes plants of the world's sins.

The Praise of Kasi

22

Serve Kasi with love as long as you live,
Kasi, the wishing-cow of this age of Kali!
It calms down all affliction, woes, sin and disease,
It amasses all things good and auspicious.

40 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Its boundaries on all four sides are her lovely feet,
Served with adoration by this heavenly city's
inhabitants;

Its hallowed pilgrim-places are her auspicious limbs.
Her hair, its Shivalingams, numberless and eternal.
Its inner habitations are her excellent udders,
Her nipples the four fruits of life, the Veda-believers
her calves.

Her dewlap the shining river, Varuna, her tail the
Asi,

Bhairava with rod in hand her horns
Wherewith he frightens the wicked, whose mind is
set on evil doings,

Lolarka-Trilochan are her eyes, Karnaghanta the bell
on her neck.

Manikarnika is her beautiful face like the moon,
The delight of the Ganga is the beauty of her visage.
The Pancha-Kosi is her greatness, filled with one's
supreme good.

The compassionate Lord Vishwanath and Parvati
protect and nourish her,

The Eight Powers, Sachi and Sharada worship her,
And Lakshmi herself tends her.

Her five life-breaths are the five-lettered 'Namah
Shivaya',

Bindumadhava her joy and Panchaganga her five
products.

Rama's Name's two letters are like Brahman and
the soul.

The grass she chews on are the deeds, good and
evil,

Of all the living beings who die in the city;
She yields the pure milk of supreme liberation
Longed for by men turned away from *Maya*,

The Puranas tell that it's Vishnu's own handiwork,
fashioned with every art.

If you want to be happy, says Tulsidasa to himself,
Repeat Rama's Name, dwelling in this city of Shiva!

The Praise of Mount Chitrakuta

23

O Chitrakuta, deliverer from all sorrows, you banish
Kali-age,

You are a sapling of great good fortune;
Your lovely flower-bed is the pure earth,
The strange woods your garden with an immense
spread.

Mandakini is your gardener, watering all the time
With her excellent waters the low and odd men and
women there.

Your branches are the fine hilltops, your lovely leaves
the trees.

Your pollen are the waterfalls, your winds
The sandal-scented breezes that blow there.

Your parrots, pik-birds and honey-bees are the sages
who sport in it,

Your pleasant shades take away the hot sun's heat
of existence,

The lord of Janaki has made your powers enduring.
Seekers as travellers find it by great good fortune,
On arrival there, their many desires are all fulfilled.
You ever remain constant, beyond effects of *gunas*,
karma or time.

Sita, Rama and Lakshman are your kindly protectors.
If you want the love for Rama's feet, O Tulsidasa,
Serve the hill of Chitrakuta, sincerely observing the
rules with perfection.

Beware now, O my mind, and away to Chitrakuta!
The Kali-age in his rage cuts off the roads leading to
all

That's good and auspicious: Delusion, wickedness,
Maya grow and flourish!

Look on the ground marked by Rama's feet, see the
woods where

He lived, moved and sported, see there the hilltops
breaking

The cycle of existence, casting down the hordes of
pride, deceit and hypocrisy!

Where the world's father Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
were born,

Giving up all their play and deception.

This is where both Partha and Nala clean forgot
their sorrows

The very moment they entered the Ashram
hermitage:

Delay not, then, only consider with your lovely mind,
The coming moment as precious as the years gone
by unheeded;

Go to Chitrakuta then and repeat the mantra, the
Name

Repeating which Shiva, drinking the poison grew
immortal, unaging.

By performing the sacrifice of repeating the Name,
bathing

In the Payasvini, drinking its holy waters,

All your heart's desire will be fulfilled by Rama,

And the four great fruits fulfilled without effort
through this pleasant pursuit.

The desire-fulfilling hill Kamad will your wishing-
tree be

That endures on the earth's face from age to age.

But O Tulsidasa, know that for you in particular,
It is the one faith, one love and the only support.

The Praise of Hanuman

25

Hail, You Anjani's son, like the moon born of the
ocean,

Making the white kumud-flowers of gods' clan to
blossom forth,

Bringing comfort to the chakor-birds of Kesari's eyes,
Dispellers of the world-guardians' sorrows and
woes!

Hail, as a young monkey you devoured in eager
play the rising sun's disc,

Breaking the pride of Rahu, Sun, Shakra and
adamant,

O dispeller of refuge-seekers' fear, O world-upholder!

Hail, steadfast in combat for Rama's sake, gods'
jewel,

O Rudra incarnate, O world-preserver,

Your body, the manifest mass of blessings of
brahmans, saints and sages,

Of pure virtues, ocean of intelligence, and its creator.

Hail, skilled as you were in protecting Sugriva and
the bears,

You, the chief instrument of mighty Bali's death.

A lion in crushing Sinhika's pride while crossing
over the ocean,

You, the fiery comet for the demon-city of Lanka.

Hail, deliverer of the sorrow of Sita, Earth's
daughter,

Destroyer of Ravana's grove, he who let himself be
bound without fear by Meghanada,

The play of your tail an affliction for Ravana's Lanka,
 Making a fire-garland to set it on Holika-fire.

Hail, you brought delight to Rama and Lakshmana,
 Gatherer of the army of monkeys and bears,
 Binder of the ocean-bridge for the good of the gods,
 You bestowed on Rama victory in battle, on the sun-
 line's banner.

Hail, with terrible body, mouth and nails harder
 than adamant,

With awesome arms holding trees and rocks in hand,
 Casting mighty demon-warrior-hordes as oilseeds
 In the oilpress of battle, crushing them to pulp.

Hail, O you cause of the destruction of Ravana,
 Kumbhakarna,

Meghanada and of Kalanemi

You make possible the impossible, making possible
 most difficult.

You traveller o'er earth, sky and beneath the seas.

Hail, you warrior celebrated the world over, whose
 deeds

The wise tell, whose praise the Veda sings in accents
 pure.

You are the one to calm down Tulsidasa's woes,

O you who lived in splendour with King Rama in
 his capital.

26

Hail, monkey-king like the lion in prowess,
 Great god, home of joy and good, skull-bearing
 Shiva,

Ray-garlanded sun to the awful night of existence,
 Crowded by the wicked ones, Delusion, Pride,
 Anger and Lust;

Hail, son of the Aditi as Anjani, of Kasyap as monkey-
 kesari, dispeller of the world's woes,

You banish the grief of the world-guardians as Kok-birds and lotuses,

O Hanuman, the Swan, the bringer of good fortune;
Hail, O You with great awesome form, limbs and claws

Hard as adamant, lovely teeth, splendid tail, missile-bearer's enemy;

Hail, deliverer of Janaki from sorrows and burnings,

Making blossom the joy of Rama and Lakshmana,

You burnt Lanka with your tail in monkey-sport,

Ruined the grove, with noon-day sun's splendour;

Hail, you bridge-builder across the ocean with stones,

Like the boat, destroyer of demons' joy and pride,

Punishing Ravana-Kumbharkarna-Meghanada,
rewarding them

For their actions by striking into their vitals;

Hail you world's adornment, blessing Vibhishan,

You the mighty warrior in battle for Rama's sake

Mounted the Pushpaka with Sita and Lakshmana,
like the banner

Of the glory of the line of Sun;

Hail, you who grabbed and destroyed the enemies'
guiles,

Their spells and outrage, their secret weaponry and means,

O Controller of Shakini's, Dakini's, Putana's spells,

The spells of the ghost, spirit, goblin hordes;

Hail, you knower of Veda and Vedanta, of the
Vedangas,

O exponent of the Brahman, storehouse of
knowledge and wisdom,

Of dispassion, whose virtues Sages like Shuka and
Narada sing;

O hail, you churner of time, of *gunas*, *Karma* and
Maya,

46 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Unmoved you are in your vow of wisdom and Truth
 and Dharma,
 Served ever by *Siddhas*, gods, lord of Yogis, like the
 sun
 To the fright of darkness of Tulsidasa who seeks
 your refuge.

27

Hail, home of good fortune, dispeller of earth's load,
 In the guise of monkey, Shiva himself manifest,
 Destroyer of demons as though they were but moths
 Through Rama's ire like fire-garlands, like flame-
 wreaths;
 Hail, the home of delight of Wind-god and Anjani,
 You sole friend of Sugriva down-cast with his
 sorrows,
 You took away the fierce, formidable demons'
 destructive fires,
 Ocean of joy for the *Siddhas*, gods, of good and
 noble men;
 Hail, the Rudras' leader, first among the world's
 adored ones,
 The first among the singers of the Sama-Veda, the
 first too
 Among the conquerors of the Love-god,
 The emperor of warriors celebrated the world over,
 Follower of Rama's devotees, dedicated to Rama's
 good;
 Hail, the carrier of the news of Rama's victory in
 war,
 The message of his welfare to Koshala, you wish-
 granting tree
 For Ayodhya's people and Bharata, cooling off the
 fierce heat
 Of separation from Rama that afflicted them;

Hail, you who danced in joy to see King Rama seated firm

On his lion-throne, and like with the beauty of the ascension,

You ever sport and enjoy living in the Ayodhya of Tulsidasa's consciousness!

28

Hail, Wind-god's son celebrated for your victories,
Mighty with your long arms and long, long tail,
You Mount Sumeru incarnate, your hair shining like
Lightning-creepers, like garlands of fire;

Hail, your face like the newly-risen sun, yellow-
brown Eyes, a knot of bristling matted hair on head,
With terrible arching brows, nails and teeth like
diamonds,

Like the lion to the enemies, the maddened elephants;

Hail, you who broke the pride of Arjuna, Bhima and
Garuda,

The banner protecting Arjuna's chariot in the Great
War,

The very means of the end of the Duryodhana's
army terrible as death,

Protected by Bhima, Drona, Karna and others;

Hail, restorer of Sugriva's lost kingdom, dispeller
Of the world's calamity, destroyer of demons' pride;

You who control fears, calamities, evil planets, spirits,

Thieves, fire, disease, epidemics and afflictions all;

Hail, you commentator of the Veda, Grammars,
Scripts,

You Sama-singer, Vamadeva, granting devotees'
desires,

Sri Rama's dear, beloved brother;

Hail, you bestower of new wings, eyes, a divine
body on the bird Sampati burnt by the sun's heat

48 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

You are father and mother to Tulsidasa seeking your
 refuge,
 Afflicted as he is by the evils and burning of this
 Kali-age.

29

Hail, mass of perfect joy, lion among monkeys,
 Kesari's son,
 The sole world-sustainer, lovely jewel from Anjani's
 mine-land,
 Dispeller of devotees' affliction and anxiety;
 Hail, lord, giver of Dharma, desires, wealth and
 liberation,
 Renouncing even Brahma's world of splendours,
 Vowed to Truth and Dharma in thought, word and
 deed,
 You who love the feet of Janaki's lord;
 Hail, you breaker of Garuda's pride in might, intellect
 and speed,
 You who subdue the Love-god, sublimating your
 vital seed,
 Expert in great drama, crest-mark of a million poets,
 Triumphant over the Gandharvas' pride in the art of
 singing;
 Hail, You who pulled Mandodari's hair in Ravana's
 presence,
 O crest-jewel of warriors,
 In your anger at earth-born Sita's affliction,
 You tormented the demonesses in charge like death
 itself;
 Hail, you whose hair stand on end hearing the
Ramayana,
 Whose eyes fill with tears, whose voice is choked,
 You're the honey-bee to Rama's lotus-feet,
 O trident-bearing Shiva himself in Hanuman's form,
 Save Tulsidasa who seeks your refuge.

30

His vow is already fulfilled who has Hanuman as
refuge,

This is indelible like a line on stone drawn by a
diamond.

Hanuman makes the impossible possible,

And the possible impossible, of none else is this
praise true.

Remembering his image, home of joy, one's set free
from sorrow, from calamity,

Shiva and Parvati, Rama, Lakshmana and Janaki,

They are all favourable to him on whom your grace
descends,

It is the mine of all that is good and auspicious.

31

Who dare look with anger on one

Who has faith in all ways in Kesari's son?

Pleasing to his devotees, breaking his foes,

He is a warrior who shatters the evil one's face.

The Veda and the Puranas record his mighty deeds,

The crest-jewel of all the warriors.

He establishes the uprooted ones, throws out the
established,

Sets the hosts of gods free from their chains, true to
his vow,

Overleaping the ocean, burning Lanka, he broke the
awesome demons' power;

Even the morning sun fears him, recalling his
childhood sport,

Whose chin crushed to powder the hard Vajra's teeth,

The favour of whose glance the world-guardians
long for,

Who serves Rama, the celebrated warrior, ever
fearless,
Ever full of victory, joy and all that's good.
Like the chakor-bird gazing on Rama's full-moon
face,
His name a wishing-tree to his devotees.
Tulsidasa says the four fruits of life are in his palm
Who sings the praise of the one who is celebrated as
the restorer.

32

O stubborn one, O Hanuman, one wouldn't think
You would be like this!
There's no other master like Rama,
Nor an assistant like you, yet while you watch over
me,
Like some young one of a lion's, I'd be devoured by
a mere frog!
Meseems the Kali-age has put a spell
Even on the many virtues and qualities of your mind.
Time was when hearing your fearsome challenge,
Ten-headed Ravana's joints grew slack,
Whither has that prowess of yours fled?
Or have you grown haughty instead of
compassionate?
Your servant you held greater than yourself,
Listen to him and bear with him, then.
Hearing Tulsidasa's affliction, take this credit for
yourself,
For in all three ages, Rama's loving devotees,
They are sure to do well.

33

O Wind-god's capable son, O Raghuvara's dear one,
Whatever you have to do to me, O my brother,

Please do it now, and have done.
 By your greatness, even tamarind seeds pass as
 currency,
 Why then is it dark all around when it's my turn,
 O you light of the three worlds?
 Through what deeds of mine did you take me as
 your own,
 And for what fault or wrong have you cast me out
 now?
 Begging for crumbs, living on it, I took your name;
 By your power, I swear by you,
 I lived in the world until today, being known;
 If I'd turned away from you, with my heart,
 Why then should I have shown you my face
 And spoken to you words like your own?
 Who is omniscient like you, O mine of knowledge?
 I know only too well that going against one's master
 Leads only to ashes and dirt.
 With your master like Rama,
 With your mistress like Sita,
 Who is there for Tulsidasa, what's there for his
 support?

34

Do not take ill the words of those
 Who are in extreme affliction, utterly selfish,
 And those who're most wretched and woe-stricken,
 For they consider not what they say before speaking.
 It's often been seen and heard in the world
 That men and women abuse the gods
 When overwrought by too much rain or drought.
 I have only said something,
 Being sore afflicted with unbearable misery.
 Look to your own ways then and forgive me.

52 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

In straits does one remember one's capable benefactors,
 And they come to one's rescue, overlooking one's faults.

The master always sets right his servant's ill-fortune,
 Your compassion, says Tulsidasa, is pure and flawless.

35

One speaks bitter words when times are hard,
 A good master hearing them understands,
 And sets right the wrong, out of his own goodness.
 Finding a good and capable lord,
 Who feels the affliction of others,
 All look up to him just as rivers rush unbidden to the sea,

Men and women all want their own good:

Through connexions, good or ill, they adore
 And praise those they like.

The one you've kept by force, giving assurance of support,

Nourish him like your own servant, even if he's of no service.

The fault and fickleness are all mine

While you're great in your goodness;

Being respected I've grown insolent, out of my own baseness.

The holy books sing of your fame as deliverer of the captive.

The good of Tulsidasa comes out of your own goodness.

36

An image of good fortune is the Wind-god's son,
 He pulls out the roots of all ill.

The son of Wind is the benefactor of saints,
 Rama, who sports in Avadha, dwells in his heart.
 Mother, father and Guru, Ganapati and Sharada,
 Shiva and Parvati, Shuka and Narada,
 I've worshipped them, I entreat them all:
 May the love for Rama's feet live forever in me,
 I bow to Rama, Lakshmana and Vaidehi-Sita,
 Who are most loving to Tulsidasa.

The Praise of Lakshmana

37

Dear Lakshmana, the beloved one, you're good to
 your devotees.

When remembered, you do away with distress and
 calamity,

Bring all good fortune, O keeper of your vows,
 compassionate!

You upholder of the earth, breaking the load of the
 earth,

O courageous one, the thousand-headed Shesha
 incarnate,

True to your word, established in truth, supremely
 devoted to Dharma,

Pure in thought, word and deed,

You home of beauty, bow and arrows in hand, quiver
 at the waist,

You warrior of renown, great conqueror in war,

Giver of joy to your servants, powerful, worthy in
 every way,

Dear to Bharata, darling of Sita and Sumitra,

Like some skilled chataka-bird

To the dark cloud that is Rama,

54 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

O Urmila's lord, of easy access to those who love
you,
Wealth and the wealthy for poor ones such as
Tulsidasa

38

Hail Lakshmana, hail Ananta, blessed with divine
power,
O you carrier of the earth, lord of serpents, lord of
the universe,
O you dispeller of the earth's burden,
You who quench the great fire-garlands of
destruction's fires,
You calm down burnings, you incarnated in your
own sport;
Hail Dasharatha's son, Sumitra's child, worthy in
battle
Laying low your foes, brother of Rama and Bharata,
Your person the colour of lovely champaka flowers,
Adorned with splendid jewels, with lovely imposing
clothes,
O you ocean of attractiveness and beauty;
Hail you bringer of joy to Visvamitra, Gautam, Janaka,
Killing a million crooked demons like so many
thorns in the world's flesh,
You breaker of Parashurama's pride with your choice
with words,
You Rama's faithful follower at all times;
Hail, ever devoted to Rama's service, indifferent to
pleasures,
Without guile, bearer of the wheel of Dharma,
Root of immense strength, in prowess like the tiger,
Meghanada's slayer, the great and mighty warrior;
Hail you, the ferryboat across the awesome ocean
of battle,

Making your powerful arms a bridge for Rama's
welfare,
You lord of Urmila, the home of all that's good,

The Praise of Bharata

39

Hail Bharata, O you most fortunate one,
You bee for the pollen-dust of the lotus-feet
Of Rama who delights in the earth-born Sita,
You world's jewel who adorns the sun's line,
The gem among rulers of the earth, loving devotee
of Ramachandra;
Hail you, indifferent to pleasures and comforts
imperial,
Difficult even for Indra and Kubera to obtain,
Manifest as the first among those whose vow is
keen as the sword's edge,
Whose pure mind is in love with Rama, like that of
the young woman devoted to her lord,
You traveller to Chitrakuta for your brother, in
perfect devotion,
You the King's shoes' regent, the supreme protector
of the kingdom,
Upholder of Dharma, great warrior you;
Hail you, whose great archery was praised by
Hanuman while fetching the herb *Sanjivani*,
Immense your strength of arms, peerless in prowess,
whose profound way is known to Rama, the life of
Janaki, alone;
Hail, you who broke the Gandharvas' pride in the
battleground,
And sang the praise of Rama's virtues;
Like a fresh-coloured cloud to Mandavi's mind's
Chataka-bird,

56 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

You, Tulsidasa's refuge, who delivered him from fear.

The Praise of Shatrughna

40

Hail, O hail, lion to the enemy-elephant, slayer of foes,

You sun ray-garlanded, dispersing the fog of enemy-darknes

You who serve the gods, brahmanas, the earth and cows,

Means of good fortune for *Siddhas*, saints and sages all;

Hail, Sumitra's son, handsome in every limb,

Famous as the follower-companion of Bharata,

Bearing shield, skin, bow, arrows and quiver,

O you calamity for your foes—I bow to you;

Hail, you, pitcher-born Agastya to the salty ocean of the demons,

Killer of the Danujas, consumer of all evil,

O Lakshmana's younger brother, bearing *tilak* on your forehead, made

From the dust of the feet of Bharata, Rama and Sita;

Hail, Srutakirti's loved one, easy to you is the difficult of access,

You comforter of devotees, giving pleasure and liberation,

Tulsidasa seeks refuge at your feet in dire affliction,
Save him, O you who take away the humbled one's anguish, his affliction.

The Praise of Sita

41

Some time, Mother, when you chance to find occasion,

Then, broaching some tale of woe, remind him of my lot,

Say, 'There's one poor wretched one, wasted, filthy and full of sins,

Calling himself a slave of the Lord's handmaiden'.

If perchance he asks: 'Who may he be?'

Tell him my name and my condition.

As soon as he hears it, the compassionate one,

All that's gone wrong with me will at once be set right.

O Janaki, mother of the world, if you only help your servant with your words,

Then, Tulsidasa, singing your Lord's praise, will cross the ocean of existence.

42

If ever you find time, O my mother Janaki,

Let him just remember, I take his Name, calling myself his slave,

That I've made a vow that like the chataka-bird, I thirst for the drink of Rama's love.

You know well his simple disposition,

How he is the very home of compassion, how he never remembers

His own virtues, nor the harm done by his enemies, nor yet

His servants' faults, nor what he's given away in alms.

It's his way to forget suchlike, to give respect to those without respect.

58 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Tell him not to forget Tulsidasa,
 Who has no other refuge even in dreams,
 In thought, word and deed.

The Praise of Rama

43

Hail, Brahman supreme, truth-consciousness-bliss
 manifest, incarnate in sport,
 When Brahma, the gods and *Siddhas* were shrinking,
 diffident,
 You took on man's body, the pure one, home of
 virtues;
 Hail, the Koshala King's and Kaushalya's good
 fortune,
 The four sons like the four lovely fruits of liberation,
 You the bestower of joy on the works and Dharma
 shown by the Veda,
 On the earth, cows, devotees, brahmans and sadhus;
 Hail you protector of the sages' sacrifices, one who
 calmed
 The agony of the virtuous, deliverer of Gautam's
 accursed wife, Ahalya,
 Breaker of Shiva's bow, crushing the pride of kings,
 Who with Parashurama bowed down their heads to
 you;
 Hail you, Dharma's upholder, steadfast Raghuvira,
 You made Chitrakuta, the Vindhya, the Dandaka
 all holy,
 Sporting in the woods, all in keeping with your
 Guru's word,
 Your mother's, your father's and your brother's
 word;

Hail you, who gave Indra's son, Jayanta, as the crow,
his act's reward;

You dug a pit and buried Viradha there;

You who recognized the demoness in the guise of a
lovely goddess,

And looked down upon her as the world's affliction;

Hail, destroyer of Khara, Dusan, Maricha, Trishira

And the fourteen thousand mighty warriors all;

You ocean of compassion, you were conquered

By the wild Shabari and Jatayu and their devotion.

You of flawless deeds who take away three kinds of
affliction.

Hail you, the slayer of the drunken Kabandha,

You slayer of Bali, he who made Sugriva the king,

You organized an army of bears and monkey-
warriors,

And when Ravana's younger brother bowed at your
feet, you gave him honour;

Hail you, who caused the marvel of the bridge over
the ocean,

Built all in sport,

Who surrounded Lanka that was inaccessible even
to Death's mind,

Who destroyed Ravana with all his clan in battle,

Setting the world-guardians and the worlds free
from fear;

Hail to you who mounted the Pushpaka, returning

To your capital with Sita, Lakshmana and your
ministers;

Says Tulsidasa, when Rama and Sita arrived in
Ayodhya

And became their King, and Sita their queen,

The people of Avadha were filled with supreme joy.

Hail, King of kings, lotus-eyed Rama whose Name,
 A wishing-tree in this Kali-Age, gives solace,
 Like the pitcher-born Agastya to the ocean of
 injustice,
 Bright-rayed sun to the terrible dense demon-
 darkness;
 Hail Dasharatha's son, God of men and sages and
 gods,
 Who made the people of Avadhh worthy of praise
 by gods and sages,
 Calming the world-guardians, those Kok-birds'
 afflictions,
 Causing the lotus-forest of the sun's line to bloom
 forth;
 Hail, whose body's glow was like the colour of blue
 lotuses,
 Lake of beauty, home of virtues, the world's
 benefactor,
 Who is all loveliness and goodness, crushing the
 pride
 Of millions of mind-born Love-gods;
 Hail, with lovely bow, arrows, quiver and missiles,
 Bearing a lovely sword, shield and a choice coat of
 mail,
 You steadfast upholder of Dharma, peerless in
 prowess of arms,
 Casting down the earth's heavy demon-load in mere
 play;
 Hail, with gold crown set with jewels, ear-rings and
tilak
 Glowing on your splendid forehead, your bright
 moon-face,
 With shining clothes, gems and yellow sacred thread,

Who's there that hasn't had great fortune meditating
on your form?

Served by the handsome Bharata, Lakshmana and
Shatrughna,

Bringing delight to his ministers and devotees, open
and generous,

Refuge to all the low, wretched and downcast ones,
To anyone sinful and fallen, who but once bows
down

To you, crying to you 'Save me, lord!'

Hail, hail he whose glory shines over all fourteen
worlds,

Holy and worthy of all praise, hail King Rama!

Whose deeds emerged, like the Ganga from the lord
of mountains,

in the work of the first poet, Valmiki, in which

The company of happy saints drink and bathe;

Hail, the one in whose kingdom men and women,

All bent on their duties of caste and station,

Devoted to truth and restraint, forgiving, merciful,

Where wrong and sorrow all gone, joy and content
reign everywhere,

Hearing and singing King Rama's royal sports;

Hail, you ocean of pure knowledge and renunciation,

The humble one's comforter, doing away with pain
and evil,

Tulsidasa has sought refuge at your feet,

O you who drive away all doubt and misgiving,

Bestow on him your help, O Vaidehi's lord!

45

O my mind, sing the hymns of the gracious
Ramachandra,

Who dispels the awful fears of this existence.

62 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Whose eyes are like the fresh lotus,
 His mouth, hands and feet are all like the red lotus,
 With the boundless beauty of unnumbered Love-gods,
 With the hue of beautiful dark rain-clouds,
 The pure glow of his yellow silk robe shines forth
 like lightning,
 I adore the husband of Janaka's daughter!
 Hymn the friend of the poor and humbled ones,
 He is like the sun, destroyer of Danavas and Daitya,
 Of Raghu's line, he is the very root of bliss, the
 moon of Koshala,
 Dasharatha's son, he has a diadem on his head, ear-
 rings and a *tilak*,
 Fine ornaments adorn all his lovely limbs,
 With arms coming down to his knees, bearing bow
 and arrows,
 Who defeated Khara and Dusana in war;
 He delights Shiva, Shesha and the sages, says
 Tulisdasa,
 May he make the lotus of my heart his dwelling-
 place,
 He who breaks the evil ranks of Lust and Anger!

46

O foolish mind, ever repeat Rama, time and again,
 repeat Rama,
 Knowing in your heart, O you stupid one,
 That it is the mine of all good fortune and joy,
 Believe and speak the Name, the essence of the Veda.
 The lord of Koshala, with his body the colour of
 fresh blue lotuses,
 Like a bee in the lotus-heart of Shiva, the Love-
 god's foe,

Janaki's lord, home of joy, sole lord of the world,
 Who breaks enemies in battle, yet is most
 compassionate;
 Like smoke-bannered fire to the forest of the
 Danavas,
 With long powerful arms coming down to his knees,
 with terrible bow and arrows,
 With lotus-eyes, ruddy hands, feet and face,
 Home of virtues, treasure of beauty of many Love-
 gods,
 Sun to the water-lilies of desire, frost to lust-anger-
 delusion's forest,
 Lion to the most fiercely maddened elephant of
 greed,
 He who takes away the load of existence for his
 devotees' sake,
 O Keshava, trouble-destroyer, whose feet are adored
 By Brahma and Shiva, the source of the 'river
 Mandakini,
 The mass of bliss, dispeller of delusion, ship for the
 awful ocean of existence,
 Like a strong wind to the clouds of doubt and
 sorrow,
 Like thunderbolt to the hard mountains of sin,
 A wish-granting cow to the saints, whose Name is
 incomparable
 In removing the evil dark spots of the Age of Kali.
 Devotion, renunciation, wisdom, almsgiving, peace,
 and restraint,
 They are all dependent on the Name,
 A grove of the wishing-tree of Dharma and provision
 for travellers
 To Hari's place, sole base for many endeavours of
 the spirit.
 One who has drunken of the Name's elixir, ever
 pure,

He's performed all austerities and sacrifices, given
 all alms, done all deeds holy,
 Having witnessed the terrors of the Age of Kali,
 Outcastes, evil men, Bhils and Yavanas have all
 Reached the Lord's abode by the power of that
 Name,
 The filth never even touched their minds.
 Tulsidasa gives up all false fears and hopes to cut
 through
 All bonds of existence by repeating the Name, that
 sharp sword.

47

O mind, make such an *arati* of Rama Raghuvara,
 Who takes away all duality and sorrows,
 Being Govinda, the Master of the senses, cloud of
 bliss,
 The Lord is all-pervasive in forms animate and
 inanimate,
 Ever dwelling everywhere, and so offer to Him
 The incense-smoke of all the sensual desires,
 Then drive away the darkness of anger and delusion
 With the lighted lamp of self-knowledge,
 Thus consuming away all haughty thoughts and
 pride.
 Then make the offering of the purest, most excellent
 love,
 Which most satisfies the Lord who sports with
 Lakshmi herself.
 Offer then love's betel leaf, *paan*, all doubts and
 sorrows gone.
 The powerful dispeller of the seed of sensual desires.
 Put in then the ten wicks of deeds good and evil,
 filled with ghee,
 With renunciation as fire and with truth as light.

And with the wreath of earthen lamps, of dispassion,
 devotion and knowledge,
 Offer this fire-service to Him in whom the world
 rests.
 Make a pure heart-mansion with the clean beds of
 peace,
 Where King Rama Himself may rest and sleep.
 There, Forgiveness and Compassion are His chief
 attendants;
 With Himself there, no separation created by *Maya*
 can exist;
 Sanaka and other sages, the Veda, Shesha, Shiva and
 gods,
 All the truth-seeking sages are present at this *arati*.
 Says Tulsidasa of pure mind, he who joins in this
arati,
 Crosses over the ocean of existence,
 Throwing up all the filth, lust, anger and delusion.

48

Rama's *arati* drives all affliction away,
 Burning up all ills and sorrows, it uproots lust;
 It is lovely incense-smoke, splendid wreath of little
 lamps,
 Hearing the clapping of hands,
 The bird of evil and sins flies off,
 It dispels the darkness of ignorance
 From the devotee's heart-mansion;
 It spreads the light of pure knowledge.
 It is a frosty night to the age of Kali
 To the lotuses of lust, pride, anger and delusion;
 The emissary of liberation, its body glowing with
 lightning,
 It is a reviving shower of moonbeams

To the dropping kumud-flowers of devotees;
 It is many a Kāli to the buffalo-demon
 Of Tulsidasa's haughty pride!

49

Lord,
 You destroyer of Danujas' forest, full of virtues,
 Govinda, giver of joy to Nanda and his family,
 imperishable;
 Shambhu, Shiva, Rudra, Shankara, fearsome, terrible,
 Of extreme brilliance, a mass of anger;
 Unending, the blessed one, bringing peace to world-
 ending Death's terrors,
 You Lakshmi's husband in whom the world delights;
 Lord of Mount Kailas, lord of the world, master of
 riches,
 O cloud of wisdom, home of knowledge, and of all
 that is good;
 Manifested as the Dwarf, yet unmanifest, the holy
 one,
 Lord of the highest and the lowest, supreme soul,
 lord of nature;
 With moon on forehead, trident in hand, O you
 destroyer,
 O Hara, sinless, unborn, endless and unbroken,
 riding the Bull;
 With body the colour of the dark rain-cloud, O
 Shyama,
 With the beauty of many Love-gods, Rama, the lotus-
 eyed, gracious;
 With body white as conch or camphor, perfectly
 flawless head,
 With the gods' river on your matted hair like a
 garland of white flowers;

Wearing clothes the colour of lotus-pollen,
 Bearing chakra, bow, conch, lotus, and the great
 mace Kaumodaki;
 Lion to the maddened elephant, the Love-god, three-
 eyed,
 O Hara, destroyer of the world's meshes, I bow to
 you;
 Krishna, home of compassion, the One who crushed
 the wicked serpent, Kaliya,
 He who broke Tripura's pride, wearing the wild
 elephant's skin,
 You serpent-eagle to the serpent Andhaka,
 Brahman, all-pervasive, whole and without parts,
 Giver of the supreme good to others, beyond the
 senses,
 Beyond knowledge, you who dispel changes of the
 three *gunas*,
 Thunderbolt to the mountainlike pride of Sindhu's
 son,
 Gauri's Lord, O Bhava, who destroyed Daksha's
 entire sacrifice;
 You who love devotion, the wishing-cow to your
 devotees,
 O Hari, dispeller of all awful afflictions and terrible
 calamities;
 You giver of joy and comfort, granting boons,
 dispassionate,
 You whole and spotless, sporting in Kasi's lanes, in
 that forest of delight!
 This sweet series of the Names of Hari and Shankar,
 It drives away all duality and affliction, it's a mine
 of bliss,
 It is like a stairway to the realms of Vishnu and Shiva,
 For ever and ever, says Tulsidasa, in words pure
 and clear.

Sun to the lotus of the sun's line, with a million
 Love-gods' beauty,
 Whose powerful arms bear a terrible bow with
 arrows in a choice quiver,
 You of boundless strength whose eyes are like petals
 of the red lotus,
 With clothes like burnished gold, skilled in the art
 of weaponry,
 Served by gods and *Siddhas*, the one from whose
 navel creation springs,
 Home of all attractiveness, image of the universe,
 most profound in qualities,
 You are supreme in maturity, your glory is most
 noble,
 Formidable, uncrossable, inaccessible, you're lord of
 heaven,
 Axe for felling the tree of this existence.
 You who set free the sage's wife who was under a
 curse,
 Taking the brahman Viswamitra's side, skilled in the
 protection of his sacrifice,
 You broke Shiva's bow at King Janaka's gathering,
 breaking
 The pride and glory of the awesome Parashurama;
 You who renounced the kingdom to honour your
 father's word,
 A kingdom that was hard to give up, together with
 Sita and Lakshmana;
 With Janaka's daughter, you manifested in human
 form even though unborn;
 Determined to kill the evil ones, you protector of
 three worlds;
 Your holy feet made the Dandaka forest sacred,

You who killed Marich in the form of the magic deer,
 You who took away your friend Sugriva's mass of woes, breaking
 The power-drunken Bali's pride of strength,
 Like a lion to the maddened lord of elephants;
 You who made your mountainlike enemy tremble in the battlefield,
 With the terrible army of Vanaras and bears as warriors;
 You built a bridge over the ocean, set the gods free,
 Crushing the ten-headed one with twenty arms, with his whole clan;
 With a cause for your incarnation that was incomparable—
 to take away the earth's burden, destroying the ranks of the evil, the gods' enemies,
 You're pure and invincible, one without a second, beyond *gunas*,
 Yet Brahman manifest with qualities, I remember you as Rama, a king of men;
 The Veda, Shesha, Sharada, Shiva, Narada and Sanak all praise your virtues,
 Yet your acts remain endless, beyond their reach.
 Rama, Avadha's lord, dear to Shiva, the Love-god's enemy,
 You are ever like the ship across Tulsidasa's ocean of terrors of existence.

51

Janaki's lord, lord of Raghu's line, sun to the darkness Of passions, with youthful body, home of brilliance;
 Truth-Consciousness-Bliss, the mine of the root of joy in whom the world finds repose,

70 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

The handsome Rama in whom the whole world
delights;

With lovely radiance like that of fresh rain-cloud, at
his waist

A yellow cloth of silk, he's the wearer of a choice
robe,

On whose head is a lovely diadem set with gold
and jewels,

With the splendour of a hundred suns shining;

Rings in ears, *tilak* mark on forehead, lovely
eyebrows, large eyes recalling red lotuses,

A look from whose face dispells the woes of the
three worlds,

O you swan in the heart-lake of Shiva, Love-god's
enemy,

With shapely nose, comely cheeks, teeth with a
diamond glow,

Your lips are red like the fruit bimba, with a sweet
smile,

Your neck like a conch-shell, lovely chin, a deep rich
voice,

You are true to your vow, dispelling the gods' woes
and terrors;

On your breast rests a delicate fresh garland of forest
flowers, with strangely coloured fresh Tulsi leaves

A swarm of honey-bees above it, gently humming a
note as they fly in sport,

With a lovely Sri-Vatsa mark on your chest, ornaments
on arms,

Bracelets, necklace, and on your waist sweetly ringing
little bells;

Janaki seated on a lion-throne to your left, a tender
creeper,

As it were, of gold on a tamal tree.

Your arms are long, reaching down to your knees,
 your left arm
 Adorned with a bow, in the right hand an arrow;
 The entire concourse of sages, gods, *Siddhas* and
 Gandharvas praise you
 With men, Nagas and many a king.
 Without sin, indivisible, omniscient, you are lord of
 all,
 You are our benefactor in every way from all
 quarters,
 Skilled in the art of dispelling the sorrows of those
 who seek your refuge,
 I bow to you, O Rama, with your brother Lakshmana,
 Sumitra's son,
 Whose lotus-feet are adorned with the thunderbolt
 among other holy signs,
 They are the home of joy and of Lakshmi, having
 made
 Their chief temple in the pure heart of Hanuman,
 They are for ever and ever the refuge of Tulsidasa,
 dispeller of his grief.

52

O King of Koshala, O lord of the universe, you sole
 benefactor of the world,
 Boundless are your virtues, your play is vast in its
 spread!
 Shambhu, Sanak and other sages as also the Veda,
 Shuka and Sharada,
 All the meditative ones sing the saga of your holy
 acts.
 You took on the body of the Fish to save your
 devotees,
 Becoming a boat for the earth with greatness most
 massive,

Your form is one with the parts of all sacrifices,
 As the most terrible Boar, you delivered the
 perishing Earth
 From Hiranyaksha, the lord of the Danujas;
 O Murari, as the Tortoise with the most awesome
 body,
 When you took Mandara on your hard back during
 the Ocean's churning,
 The mountain moving on it was but a pleasant
 sensation:
 You produced the Elixir, the Cow of Plenty, Indira
 and the Moon
 Bestowing great joy on the heavenly hosts;
 When the evil demon Hiranyakasipu violated
 brahman-dharma,
 Terrorising men, saints, sages, gods and the Nagas,
 You took the body of the Man-lion to tear the enemy
 apart,
 Bringing great joy to your devotee Prahlada.
 O Brahman, you disguised yourself as a brahman
 boy, the Dwarf,
 To dupe the demon Bali, measuring the universe in
 just three steps.
 Then from your toenail sprang the waters of the
 holy Ganga,
 Purifying the three worlds, dispelling the grief of
 Aditi, mother of the gods;
 You came down as the axe-bearing Parashurama,
 like a lion
 To the warrior kings, as though a herd of elephants,
 Like rain-bearing clouds to the crops of brahmans!
 You became Rama, my adored one, to break the ten-
 headed Ravana with twenty arms,
 Even though you are the Brahman, the Supreme
 Being Himself,

You manifested yourself in the human body
 To deliver the Earth of her burden for the sake of
 your devotees.
 Like the full moon to the kumudini flowers of the
 Vrishni line,
 O you Radha's lover, fiery comet to the forest of
 Kansa and his clan;
 I adore the incarnation of the compassionate Buddha,
 Home of virtues and of pure wisdom, Cloud of
 knowledge, the unborn,
 Who manifested Himself when he saw the world
 troubled by the mighty hypocrites,
 To break the whole network of false sacrifices.
 The filth of the Age of Kali having darkened all
 men's minds,
 In this Night of delusion, through the darkness
 spread by the Yavanas
 You've arisen as a sun in the form of Kalki, son of
 Vishnuyasha,
 To take away Tulsidasa's burden of calamity.

53

O you giver of all good fortune, the mine of all
 forms of auspiciousness,
 All and the lord of all, you're ever delight-giving to
 all,
 You honey-bee to the pollen of Shiva's lotus-heart,
 charming in form,
 O jewel among kings, O Rama, I bow to you!
 Full of virtues, you are the home of all joys and of
 peace
 Whose Name is endowed with all riches most sacred,
 Most pure and tranquil and stainless, you are home
 of knowledge,

74 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Dispelling anger, pride and delusion, O home of
 compassion!
 Unconquered and flawless, unmanifested and beyond
 sense-objects,
 Pervasive, one without a second, unchanging, unborn
 and peerless,
 The supreme Self made manifest, perfectly natural,
 supreme helper,
 You inspirer unending, I bow to you as the liberated
 One,
 You beautiful earth-upholder, Sri's husband, you crush
 the Love-god's pride,
 You, the ultimate limit of beauty most delightful!
 Hard to obtain, hard to see, hard to infer, you're
 hard to cross too;
 Yet you are easy of access, dispeller of this life of
 birth and death,
 You are open to tender, delicate emotion of love;
 Creator of truth, dedicated to truth, your vow is
 ever true,
 Ever-endowed, and content, dispeller of affliction
 and anguish,
 Dharma is your coat, you're incomparable in the
 knowledge
 Of Brahman and karma, O Murari, you're adored
 by brahmins
 And those who are devoted to the Brahman,
 You are eternal, without 'me and mine', ever free,
 without pride,
 O Hari, you the Cloud of Knowledge, the root of
 Truth-Consciousness-Bliss,
 Protector of all, controller of all-devouring death,
 established on the summit,
 Your brilliance is profound, you are favourable to
 your devotees,

You are the pursuit, the pursuer and the object of pursuit,

Both the speaker and that which is spoken of,

You are the mantra, the repeater, and the object of the mantra, both creation and creator;

You Prime Cause, with lotus rising from your navel, your body the hue of the rain-cloud,

You're both with attributes and without them, the unseen and all that is seen;

Pervasive like the sky, without passion, O you Brahman!

The lord of boon-granting gods, the eternal Vaikuntha, the pure stainless celibate, the Dwarf;

Ever praised by the gods and *Siddhas*, ever destroying hypocrisy, rendering it baseless;

Complete bliss arrayed, you take away delusion, ignorance and the calamity arising from three ills;

Tulsidasa has sought refuge in you, in thought, word and deed,

You are to him like the pitcher-born sage Agastya

To dry up the ocean of the terrors of this existence!

54

Lord,

Famed the world over, lord of the universe, home and boundary of the universe,

Brahman, lord of the boon-giving gods, the lord riding the snake-eagle,

Lord of speech, all pervasive, pure and stainless, vast and powerful, lord of Nirvana;

Nature, primal element, the five senses, and three *gunas*,

The gods, heavens, wind, fire, water and the earth, Reason, mind, the sense-organs, breath and consciousness,

76 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Time, atom and the mighty power of intelligence:
Everything that is here is your form, O jewel among
kings!

Both manifested and unmanifest, Vishnu beyond
change and mutation,

The worlds are all your limbs, adored by Shiva, the
Love-god's foe,

Your two feet fathered forth Mandakini, O you the
conqueror!

You blessed one are the beginning, middle and end,
You are omnipresent, Lord, whom the knowers of
Brahman see,

Like the thread in cloth, clay in the pot, the snake in
the garland,

As the wooden elephant in the tree, as gold in
ornament;

Profound and deep, you pride-breaker, you know
hidden meanings,

You're concealed yourself, the Teacher, beyond sense-
perception,

You are knowledge, knower and the object of
knowledge, knowledge is dear to you,

You house of immense glory, you help cross the
terrible ocean of existence;

True to your vow, beyond aeons, the terminator of
aeons, beyond imagination,

You rest on a serpent couch, O lotus-eyed, with
lotus rising from your havel,

With body glowing like the rain-cloud, whose banner
is that of a monkey,

You have the beauty of ten million Love-gods,

Easy of access yet hard to find, hard to adore, you
destroy all evil vices,

Inaccessible, formidable, dispeller of all calamities,
bad ends,

The breaker of the pride of Sanak and the sons of
 Brahma,
 Favourable to your devotees, you eradicator of all
 the piercing agonies of existence,
 Your Name is like fire to the cotton-wool of
 existence,
 You are the sun to the dark night of fickle longings
 and desires,
 Bearer of the earth, dispeller of the fears of refuge-
 seekers,
 You home of compassion, your feet are adored by
 the mighty heavenly hosts,
 You wear on your breast a garland of mandār flowers,
 Save, O lord, this Tulsidasa afflicted by a host of
 miseries:
 I'm bowed down before you, O you Ravana's enemy.

55

Lord,
 Rama, you banish your saints' fears, the universe
 itself finds repose in you,
 O you in whom Shiva, Love-god's, enemy, delights!
 You home of pure intelligence, Cloud of Truth-
 Consciousness-Bliss,
 You make the buds of the virtuous to grow, you
 enemy of Khara!
 Home of nobility and equanimity, you control the
 imbalance of mind.
 Rama, Lakshmi's husband, Ravana's foe, sword-and-
 shield bearing,
 Wearing a coat of mail, a quiver of arrows at your
 lovely waist, with missile and a bow;
 Your vow is true, Nirvana-bestower and the Good
 of all, you're full of all virtues, knowledge and
 wisdom;

78 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Your Name the brilliant ray-garlanded sun to the
 terrible dark night of existence,
 Burning fiercely, you dispel your devotees' burnings,
 your body,
 Even though princely, is the very form of tapas,
 beyond all darkness,
 The true ascetic, crushing pride, lust, envy and desire,
 O you lord of mind,
 You're like the Mount Mandāra to churn the ocean
 of dark delusion,
 Famed in the Veda, lord of gods, the Dwarf, pure
 and without passion,
 You're the lord of speech, the master of Vaikuntha,
 quelling
 Lust, anger and other vices, make forgiveness to
 grow,
 You are the very form of peace, you who ride the
 lord of birds;
 Most holy and blessed, the forest-fire to the munja
 grass of the host of Sins,
 You the world's adornment, Dushana's foe, lord of
 the worlds, O master of the earth,
 Hail to you, the worlds' upholder, with the Veda
 itself on your brow
 You're stainless, indivisible, constant, you are the
 mass of bliss,
 You bring peace to those agonized by the Age of
 Kali,
 Sleeping on the bed of snakes, your eyes the colour
 of lotus-buds,
 You're omnipresent, dwelling on the ocean of milk,
 The giver of joy to *Siddhas*, poets and the wise ones,
 hard to reach for the evil one
 Your feet from which the holy Ganga sprang, the
 very sight

Of which does away with all the host of sins;
 Eternally liberated, endowed with divine qualities,
 and Divine,
 Beyond *gunas*, blessed, unending, law-giver and
 governor of all,
 You nourish and bear the universe itself, you its
 first Cause,
 Tulsidasa seeks refuge in you, the destroyer of the
 terrors of existence.

56

Lord,
 The killer of the Danujas, ocean of mercy, breaker of
 pompous pride,
 You burn up awful sins, dismissing haughtiness,
 controlling all evil,
 O you palace of restraint, dispelling host of sorrows,
 destroyer of hardened evil desire,
 Adorned with many an ornament, bright like the
 sun, the blessed lord,
 Giver of protection, breaker of cycle of existence,
 mighty lord of the worlds,
 You're beyond the reach of thought, adored by Shiva,
 Earth's rescuer,
 For Shiva's devotees, you mighty upholder of the
 mountain!
 Boon-bestower, cloud-hued, lord of speech, the
 world's soul,
 You're without passion, sporting in your home in
 Vaikuntha,
 Pervading like the sky, the Dwarf, worshipped by
 all, the Lord,
 Knower of Brahman, you're Brahman Himself,
 driving away all anxiety

80 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

You're naturally beautiful, with lovely face, ever pure
 in mind,
 Ever bright, pure Omniscience, acting freely,
 independent,
 You've done all, conquered all, upholding all, true
 to your vow
 For the good of all, you bring aeons to an end;
 Eternal, without delusion, qualities, stainless,
 dwelling in self-bliss,
 You're both Nirvana and its giver, Bliss complete,
 unwavering,
 Boundless, emancipated, pure and unsullied, creator
 without ego,
 You are the root of great good, home of joy and
 glory,
 The deluded Madhu's killer, you are without pride
 yourself,
 But give honour to others, the Love-god's subduer,
 Beyond delusion, beyond illusion, lovely Lakshmi's
 husband,
 Lotus-in-hand, lotus-eyed, home of arts bearing the
 bow,
 Koshala's lord, mass of good fortune, lion to the
 drunken demon-elephants,
 You dwell in the holy woods of your devotees'
 minds,
 Sinless, One without a second, beyond death, unborn
 and unmanifest,
 Beyond measure, ever constant, you ocean of bliss!
 Immovable, homeless, you are whole and without
 blemish,
 Without beginning, you're the elder brother of
 Meghanada's killer;
 Says Tulsidasa, woebegone, weary, grief-stricken and
 exceedingly frightened,

O Rama, the supreme home of compassion, you're
 the humble one's protector,
 Save me from calamity, O save this unfavoured one!

57

Give me, O Lakshmi's husband, the blessed one's
 company
 Who are like your own limbs,
 It breaks the cycle of existence,
 Your refuge dispels all grief and sorrow:
 O Murari, those who are given the support of your
 leaf-bud feet,
 Go beyond all doubt, giving themselves to your
 devotion.
 Demons, gods, *Nagas* and *Yakshas* and Gandharvas,
Rakshasas and birds,
 All obtain your supreme place from the company of
 saints,
 The place beyond the three ends of life,
 Which can be attained only through your pleasure.
 Vritra, Bali, Bana, Prahlad, the demon Maya, the
 hunter,
 The Vulture and the brahman Ajamil fallen from his
 dharma,
 All of them had all their sins wiped away;
 Even those outside the pale, outcastes and aliens,
 Partook of your supreme bliss through the holy
 waters of your feet,
 All are at peace, without ego, without sin and
 disease, flawless,
 Beyond the three qualities, first among the knowers
 of Brahman,
 They are all dedicated, seeing all alike, seeing
 themselves too,

82 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

With the consciousness of 'mine and thine' departed,
 With supreme detachment, with attachment only for
 you,

O you with the *Chakra* in hand, ever focussed on the
 good of all.

Pride and anger left behind, they've earned a mass
 of merit.

Where they stand, there too goes Vishnu the Lord,
 The dweller on the Ocean of Milk, along with Brahma
 and Shiva.

If the Veda are the ocean, meditation the Mount
 Mandāra,

And the entire host of sages churn it together,
 The emerging essence is the Company of saints, so
 says Krishna, Rukmini's lord,

With this special contact with the holy ones,
 All doubt and sorrow, fear and elation, darkness
 and the crowd

Of lust and craving are all gone,
 Just as with the speeding arrows shot by Sri Rama,
 The entire ranks of demon-armies are destroyed.

Wheresoever I may be born by my karma, wandering
 through the wombs of the universe,

Suffering through a whole host of miseries,
 May devotion and the saints' company be my one
 resort, O Rama!

For the powerful threefold disease, devotion is the
 only medicine,

The *advaita*-knowing devotee, the only physician,
 For there is no difference between the saints and
 the lord Himself

Though Tulsidasa is of impure mind,
 He can say this much!

Give me, O Kamala's husband, the support of your
 lotus-hands,
 Which banish all woes and calm down all grievous
 afflictions,
 Like Rahu devouring the moon of ignorance,
 Like a lion to the mad mad elephants of pride and
 lust, O Dushan' foe!
 This body is the universe, attachment to it is the
 fortress of Lanka
 That was built by the Danava, Maya, the human
 mind;
 The different sheaths of its being like Lanka's many
 splendid palaces.
 The three qualities like the chiefs of its threefold
 army;
 Pride in this mortal body is like a terrible ocean,
 awesome, vast and fathomless
 Being without bounds and most difficult to cross,
 The passions and desires are the crocodiles,
 The will to attachment its tossing waves;
 Delusive clinging is its ten-headed Ravana, egoism
 Kumbhakarna,
 Meghanada is lust that disturbs its repose, greed its
 Atikaya,
 Evil Mahodara is its selfishness, anger that devil,
 Devantaka;
 Enmity is Durmukha, hypocrisy Khara, deception
 Akampana,
 Haughtiness is the demon Manujada, conceit
 Shulapani:
 Immensely powerful, extremely hard to conquer are
 these forces
 Sixfold, with their demon-wives, the six senses;
 The soul that serves your lotus-feet is Vibhishana,

84 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Dwelling in the very midst of this forest of evil
ones, ever in dread worry.

Restraint and vows are the world's eight guardians
With Indra in abject fear, being subject to Lanka's
lord;

Knowledge is the lord of Avadha, devotion pure the
mistress of the house

Where the Lord, dispeller of Earth's burden,
incarnates himself,

Seeing his devotees' afflictions, obeying his father's
word,

The lord of Vaidehi goes to the forest,

The means of liberation are the concourse of bears
and monkeys,

With knowledge as Sugriva, to build a bridge over
the ocean of existence,

Powerful non-attachment is Hanuman, Wind-god's
fierce son,

Like a fiery comet to the forest and forts of sense
objects;

For his servants' sake, the demon-ruler was
destroyed by the Lord,

Who does away with the world's woes, the mass of
enlightenment,

Along with his brother Lakshmana and with Janaki,
May he dwell for ever in Tulsidasa's heart.

59

O Chosen one of Raghu's line, you who raises up
the wretched ones,

O you house of compassion, you calm down
afflictions and ranks of sins,

You are the very image of pure, perfect, unsullied
Enlightenment,

Image of grace, first among kings, bringing comfort
 to the gods, O Khara's foe,
 This world-forest is most terrible, O Murari, being
 deep and dense,
 Crowded thick with trees of karma, with creepers
 of desires,
 And many sharp thorns of anxiety—
 Such is the hard, heavy forest of existence with close-
 set trees,
 The mind's many various fancies are the flocks of
 birds of prey living there
 Owls, hawks, crows, cranes and vultures that feed
 on flesh,
 All these evil-doers are clever at deception, ever are
 they
 On the look-out for holes, and pitfalls causing
 sorrows to those who travel through,
 Anger is the elephant gone mad, lust the king of
 beasts,
 Pride and deluded attachment wolves and bears of
 terrible deeds,
 Selfishness the cruel wild buffalo, greed a hog, dirty
 tricks jackals,
 Deception the monkeys, hypocrisy the wild cats, false
 piety tigers
 Ever causing disturbance and sorrows to the saints
 like the deer.
 Seeing this affliction within, I seek your refuge, save
 me,
 O you upholder of the universe, save me!
 Powerful egotism is the mountain hard to climb,
 and at its height,
 The cavern of great delusion with its deep thick
 darkness.

84 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Dwelling in the very midst of this forest of evil
ones, ever in dread worry.

Restraint and vows are the world's eight guardians
With Indra in abject fear, being subject to Lanka's
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Deception the monkeys, hypocrisy the wild cats, false
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me,
O you upholder of the universe, save me!
Powerful egotism is the mountain hard to climb,
and at its height,
The cavern of great delusion with its deep thick
darkness.

86 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Consciousness is the Vetala-demon, mind the
 Manujads,
 Diseases the rank of ghosts, sensual indulgences its
 venomous scorpions,
 The longing for sensual joys are the flies and
 mosquitoes,
 The evil ones are its crickets, the five senses its
 serpents, lord!
 Your awesome *Maya* has thrown me there, I'm blind
 and stupid, O eagle-riding lord,
 The river that flows through this forest of existence
 is most terrible,
 Being unbounded, filled with sins, hard to see and
 to cross over,
 In it are crocodiles of the six evil foes, the alligators
 and the whirlpools of the senses,
 Its two banks are deeds, good and evil, its current
 awful woes,
 Tulsidasa is all besieged by this whole array of evils,
 He is most confounded, being under constant anxiety,
 Save me, O you jewel of Raghu's line, save me
 From the afflictions of this most terrible, most difficult
 age of Kali.

60

I bow to Nara-Narayana, home of compassion,
 beyond the reach of contemplation,
 The very root of knowledge, the means to the good
 of the entire universe,
 Merciful in heart, immersed in austerities, compliant
 to devotees;
 Whose body is dark like a fresh blue lotus-garland,
 With beauty surpassing that of ten million Love-
 gods,

With splendour of unnumbered suns, whose eyes
 are like tender, delightful lotuses,
 Whose face is like the moon and laughter like
 moonbeams;
 Home of all beauty, of manifold virtues,
 Served by Brahmā, the Veda, the enlightened and
 Shiva, yet without pride;
 The host of sages as bees drink in the Mandakini
 That arises from the pollen of the red lotuses of
 your feet,
 You broke the pride of the terrible Love-god sent
 by Indra,
 With anger gone, immersed in wisdom, continent;
 Who made the awesome play of the end of the epoch
 by His power
 For Markandeya, the best among sages,
 Who is ever seated in one form in the lotus-posture
 At Badarika Ashram amidst holy woods, hills and
 rivers,
 Giver of joy to the *Siddhas*, the lord of yogis and to
 the gods,
 Whose incomparable vision bestows great good
 fortune,
 O you world-sustainer, there are mountain fastnesses
 there
 Like Manbhanga, Chittabhanga and others,
 While we face here mountains like pride, haughtiness,
 lust and anger,
 Enmity, selfishness and passion are powerful
 hindrances,
 Most merciless and cruel operators are they,
 Here the amorous glances of women like the razor's
 terrible edge,
 The Love-god's egotism like the sword's edge,

Bringing affliction to the minds even of steadfast,
 profound ones,
 What then of worthless wretches such as we!
 O Lord, this path is supremely difficult to tread,
 Rogues and vile ones being my odd companions
 here,
 Nor do I have in my hand the staff of non-attachment,
 Your slave eagerly seeking your vision is so terrified
 by the bond of *Maya*,
 Save, O Hari, save your slave in dire anguish,
 Tulsidasa, without the provision of dharma, weary
 and anguished, is most dejected,
 Delusion having destroyed his reason:
 O Lord, give without delay the support of your
 lotus-hands,
 O you disc-bearer, the mass of splendour, strength
 and comfort.

61

O Bindumadhava, the cloud of all joys, you make
 Kasi holy, the forest of delight,
 O you dispeller of misfortune arising from duality,
 To whose lotus-feet resort like so many bees, Brahma
 and Shiva,
 Sanaka, Sanandana, Shukadeva, Shesha and the host
 of sages;
 With body dark as pure emerald, with beauty of ten
 million Love-gods,
 With yellow robe that recalls lightning among dark
 clouds,
 With your lovely glances from eyes like the hundred-
 petalled lotus,
 With your graces soaked in compassion, you bring
 comfort to your devotees,

Lion to the lordly elephant of time, fire to the forest
of the demon-king,

You are the very sun to the night of delusion!

In your four hands are the discus, the mace
Kaumodaki, the lotus and the conch-shell

The conch on the lotus is verily like a royal swan;

Your tiara, ear-rings, *tilak*, locks of hair like clouds
of bees,

Your delightfully lovely cheeks, your lovely nose,
your conch-shell neck,

Your sweet laughter like moonbeams, like the kunda
flowers,

O Hari, they all form the very limit of delight!

On your breast shines a large garland of forest-
flowers, with fresh buds in clusters,

With the excellent Sri-Vatsa mark adorning it,

Most devoted to brahmans, most praiseworthy and
without anger,

You are unborn, of strength measureless, your great
glories beyond all limits,

On your hands are gold bracelets, set with jewels,
adorned

With necklace, armlets, a jewelled girdle round your
waist,

On your feet are little sounding anklets, like singing
swans,

All your limbs are auspicious, your garments all
beautiful.

At your right the lovely daughter of the ocean, Sri
herself,

She who is endowed with great good fortune,
auspicious for all the three worlds,

You dwell on the bank of the Ganga, the gods' river,
in a fine temple,

Blessed are the men who set eyes on you!

90 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

O you mansion of well-being, you put all terrible
 doubts to rest,
 Consuming the forest of sins, O world-bearer, you
 are the world's Good,
 Unconquered, beyond the grasp of the senses, you
 the benevolent universe-creator-nourisher-destroyer,
 You are the mine of knowledge, higher knowledge,
 of dispassion and majesty,
 You are the generous giver of the eight *Siddhis*, the
 powers miraculous,
 Tulsidasa, caught by the serpent of existence is sore
 frightened,
 O Sri Rama, who rides the serpent-devouring
 Garuda, save him!

62

This is the supreme fruit of life, the supreme
 greatness,
 That these eyes may be filled with the lovely sight
 of Bindumadhava's beauty from head to feet
 His body, well-favoured, youthful and full is
 beautiful,
 Its dark hue is exceedingly handsome,
 As though the blue lotus, the rain-cloud, the tamal
 tree, emerald,
 All have gained their flow from it;
 On his soft, delicate feet are all the auspicious signs,
 His fingers and nails provide the incomparable simile,
 As though lotuses, red and blue, had blossomed
 from a row of leaves bejewelled;
 His gold anklets set with gems are lovely, bringing
 comfort to the devotee,
 It is as though taking varied forms within the heart
 of Shiva,
 Hari had built a fine temple and dwelt there;

The sweet sound of the little bells tinkling at his waist,

It is incomparable, it is indescribable,

It is as though bees were buzzing happily among buds of lotuses of gold;

The mark of Bhrigu's foot on his great chest is most comely, indicating its tenderness.

Charming are the bracelets and the many various adornments

As if Brahma himself had fashioned them with his own hand;

The lovely pendant shining amidst his necklace of elephant-pearls is beyond description:

As though the nine planets were meeting among the starry hosts upon a rain-cloud!

On his serpentine arms shine the lotus, conch-shell, disc and mace.

His neck is the very limit of loveliness, his mouth, his chin and his lips are beautiful beyond measure;

The sight of his teeth put to shame the splendour of lightning, diamonds, kunda buds;

Beautiful are his nose, his eyes, his cheeks, his earrings and his eyebrows,

They have all won my heart.

His curls and the tiara on his head, the *tilak* on his forehead,

They may be described as though two little lines of lightning,

Losing their mobility, had become fixed on the moon's face.

His pure yellow robe is beyond compare, no image comes to mind,

As though on an emerald mountain's peak set with many jewels,

A cloth of gold were glowing in splendour.

On his right is seated Indira lovingly, beautiful,
 As though by a tamal tree, a creeper of gold were
 draped in yellow.
 Hundreds of Sarasvatis, Sheshas and Vedas together
 fail to praise this splendour,
 How then can this dull-witted Tulsidasa, caught up
 in the duality of existence, sing it.

63

O my mind, this much is the supreme fruit of life in
 this body,
 That you might, giving up your innate nature, behold
 for a moment
 The beauty of Bindumadhava, perfect in every limb.
 His tender feet like the fresh red lotus, his toenails'
 glow doing away with the heart's darkness,
 With choice lines showing the thunderbolt, banner,
 ear of barley, lotus and goad
 Which subdues the elephant of the mind.
 His anklets of gold set with jewels, his girdle, repeat
 a sweet tune.
 His belly with its three lines, his navel, the deep
 lake
 From which grew Brahmā, the Creator, with his
 knowledge;
 On his neck glows a garland of forest-flowers, with
 a most splendid pendant,
 The mark of the brahman Bhrigu's foot that draws
 the mind,
 His body dark as a garland of blue lotuses,
 His yellow robe that comes down in a shower of
 beauty,
 Bracelets and lovely bangles on his hands, rings on
 his fingers bring me a singular joy,

Lovely are the mace, the lotus, the conch and the
 discus he bears,
 His four arms like the trunks of elephants;
 His conch-shell neck is the very limit of beauty,
 His teeth, his red lips, and his straight nose,
 His eyes like fresh red lotuses, his face like the
 moon,
 Giving joy to his devotees with his pure and open
 laughter;
 Lovely are his cheeks, the rings on his ears, on his
 head a tiara, a *tilak* on his forehead,
 Delightful are his eyebrows, his glances full of beauty,
 His locks of hair put to shame the lines of black
 bees;
 On the right is the Ocean's daughter—a mine of
 beauty, virtue and graciousness,
 Immersed in the adoration of his feet,
 She, whose kindly glances Shiva, Brahma, sages,
 men, gods and demons all desire,
 Tulsidasa's terror of existence will be gone only when
 his mind's caught by the lovely image,
 Or else he will keep wandering through countless
 births,
 Wretched and dirty, without aim, without comfort.

64

I bow to Raghupati, the home of compassion, by
 whom
 One is rid of the sense of being estranged from
 Brahman;
 As the moon, lord of the night, to the kumuda
 flowers,
 So you bring comfort to those of the line of Raghu,
 Whose lotus-feet are served by Brahma and Shiva,
 Like a bee for the heart-lotus of your own devotees,

94 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Your body beautiful like countless gods of Love;
 The sun to the most powerful darkness of delusion,
 Like terrible fire to the deep, dense darkness of
 ignorance,
 The great Agastya for drying up the ocean of pride,
 Pleasing the gods, breaking the burden of the earth,
 You snake-eagle to the serpents of enmity and
 passion,
 Lion to the elephant of lust, O the demon Mura's
 foe,
 Your lotus-feet are a boat for the ocean of existence,
 O the lord of Janaki, the very root of joy!
 O Swan on the lake of Hanuman's love,
 O you wish-granting Cow for those who are past
 desire,
 Kind to all kine, O you *tilak* of the three worlds,
 O Rama, you are the forest of virtues,
 Says Tulsidasa, he is the very abode of peace.

65

O my tongue, delight in 'Rama', Rama!', repeat thou
 'Rama, Rama!' make a japa of 'Rama, Rama'!
 Be thou as insistent on the love of Rama's Name, O
 my mind,
 As the rain-bird on the fresh clouds!
 As all wells, rivers, lakes, oceans and waters are
 worthless, a despair,
 To the love-thirsty bird, so are all pursuits for you,
 Unless you long for the sweet ambrosial *svati*-drop
 of the Name,
 The clouds rumble, thunder, rain down thunderbolts
 and hails stones
 To test the love within the bird's heart, yet more
 and more

Does it swell in its breast as it recognises the very limit of love.

With Rama's Name in mind, with the Name as the object of love,

With Rama's Name as its very goal, whoever has been, is or will be

He is most blessed indeed in all the three worlds.

This one-sided love's road is most difficult to travel;

Delay not, then, for even a moment's rest, for shade.

O Tulsidasa, your good lies in keeping th vow of love

Without the slightest distraction on your side.

66

O mad one! repeat 'Rama', repeat thou 'Rama'!

That Name will be your boat across the terrible ocean of existence,

You'll gain all wealth, all the *Siddhis* through this means alone,

For, all the means like Yoga, restraint and *Samadhi* are eclipsed by the age of Kali;

Whether he is good or vile, right or left, yet in the end

The Name of Rama will work for all.

This world's garden is only blossoming and with fruit, all in the air,

Be not deceived by these smoke-castles!

Whoever puts his trust elsewhere, giving up Rama's Name,

Says Tulsidasa, he is like to the fool who leaves the food served at his own table

To go begging for crumbs of others all round.

67

O my heart, ever repeat with love 'Rama', 'Rama!
 For, in this age of Kali, there is left neither
 renunciation,
 Nor Yoga, nor sacrifices, nor even austerities;
 Of all the pursuits and observances by the Shastras,
 Remembering Rama is the right royal one:
 To forget Rama is the crowning omission,
 Rama's Name is the great jewel while this world's
 meshes are a serpent,
 Take the jewel, the serpent grows restless,
 bewildered, troubled.
 The Name is a wishing-tree that brings all the four
 fruits of life,
 So declare the Puranas, the Vedas, pandits and Shiva
 himself;
 The Name is the sum of love and the supreme end
 of life,
 The Name of Rama is the very ground Tulsidasa's
 life rests on.

68

O my tongue, as long as you repeat not 'Rama, Rama,
 Rama',
 You'll burn in the three fires wherever you go,
 Even by the Ganga, the gods' river, you'll go without
 water, and suffer thirst,
 Even under the divine wishing-tree will you be
 tormented by poverty.
 You will have no comfort, whether waking, dreaming
 or in sleep,
 Through birth after birth, in age after age, you'll
 weep in this world.
 The more you struggle to free yourself, the more
 particularly will you be bound.

The food you eat soaked in ambrosia will turn to poison.

For a wretch like you, says Tulsidasa, in the three worlds and three ages,

The Name of Rama is your way to liberation, even as water is to the fish.

69

Remember thou with love the Name of King Rama,

It is the provision for the unprovided,

The companion for the companionless,

It's fortune for the unfortunate, virtue for the worthless one,

It's the purchaser for the pauper,

A generous giver for the lowly one,

For the low-born, it is a high pedigree—

The Veda is the witness, so I have heard.

It is hands and feet to the cripple, eyes to the blind,

It is mother and father to the hungry,

Support for one without support;

A bridge for the ocean of existence,

The means to the very essence of joy!

For raising up the fallen there's no other Name like Rama's,

By remembering which a barren land like Tulsidasa has become fertile!

70

If you will only follow my counsel well,

And love the Name of Rama with all your heart,

It will be in every way your good.

Rama's Name is like the fire to burn up the shivering fever,

98 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

To cause the coward Kali with his companions to
cower away!

With Rama's name will awaken renunciation, yoga
and *japa*,

Adverse fate will not imprint your forehead with
your karma.

If you soak the Name's modaka-sweet in love's
ambrosia,

You will find such supreme content,

You'll no more need to stray from door to door.

Rama's Name is a wishing-tree:

Whatever you will beg from it, says Tulsidasa,

You shall not lack either material or the supreme
gain.

71

What, you steal-away from serving even such a
master!

Neither do you understand yourself, nor heed what
others tell you,

You're just a common pebble worth nothing!

What is inaccessible even to sages is as open to
devotees as parents,

For the Lord, the ocean of compassion is a natural
friend, himself your lover,

It is well-known in the world and in the Veda too,

There's no one as great as the lord of Raghu,

Who is with all at all times and in all places.

With an all-knowing master, the servant's theft goes
not unnoticed,

By love is one recognized—such is the Court's rule,

Not the slightest trouble is there from serving him,

For the Master accepts even the thought of service.

When He's remembered, He grows shy and meets
the servant's wishes

When pleased with someone, He's overpowered by him,

When annoyed, He sends him to his own abode.
The wishing-tree of the Name makes all fruits grow.
Tulsidasa was one who wouldn't be sold for a counterfeit coin,

No purpose served if he were kept;
Even such a good-for-nothing He made his own,
Such is King Rama!

72

From His own goodness, Rama has done good to me

Even though I was a rebel against him,
My Master has been his servant's benefactor.
Who is greater than Rama? and who's smaller than I?

People call me Rama's slave and I let them too,
Even at such great a wrong, He hasn't turned away from me.

O Tulsidasa, even a tiny little blade of grass
Does float on the water's crest,
But the water doesn't let it sink,
Knowing it has nurtured it itself,
So it is with Rama to me!

73

Wake up, wake up, O stupid soul!
Watch the night of the world!
Know thou the love of the body and the family
To be as fleeting as lightning among clouds.
While sleeping and even as you dream,
You suffer the anguish of existence
As though you were drowning in the mirage-waters,

100 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

As if bitten by a snake that's only a piece of rope.
 The enlightened ones and the Veda declare,
 And you yourself understand within your mind,
 That the sorrows and afflictions of a dream
 Disappear only on awakening.
 O Tulsidasa, only on waking up from delusion
 Do the three fevers of existence leave,
 And the pure joy of Rama's Name arises
 Naturally, of its own movement!

74

The Grace of Janaki's Lord awakens you, o good
 soul!
 Wake-up, giving up your delusion, for the love of
 the Lord.
 Think well, abandon the mind's evil,
 And sing the praise of the noble Ramachandra,
 The ocean of goodness, the friend of the poor—so
 declare the Veda;
 All through the long dark night of delusion,
 A long, long time have you slept:
 You've forgotten and lost your form incomparable
 in beauty,
 Now it is morning and the light of the sun of wisdom
 revealed,
 Banished is the dense darkness of passion,
 Of sensuality, delusion and rancour,
 Knowing it to be morning, the thieves, pride and
 drunkenness,
 The demon-hordes of lust, anger, greed and gnawing
 doubt are scared,
 To behold the splendour of Raghuvara, sin and
 affliction are spent,
 And the waters of love have done away with the
 three burnings.

Hearing this deep voice sounding in the ear,
 The exceedingly brave warriors, full of fortitude,
 the saints have arisen,
 They've all paid homage and accepted renunciation
 and content.

O Tulsidasa, the lord of mercy, having seen his
 servants' affliction,
 He has broken the meshes of the net of existence, to
 give them supreme bliss.

75

Vile or good, I'm yours, O Lord, I swear by you,
 Why should I lie to you? you know the mind of all.
 I say it with no deceit in heart, but truly in thought,
 word and deed,

I'm stubborn in this like a knot of hemp, swollen in
 water:

I trust in no other, nor do I want to worship
 Indra, Brahma, gods, men and the host of sages.
 But for you, they're all companions for their own
 selfish ends alone,

It's as give and take of dog and elephant,
 For there's no one among them all, O Raghuvara,
 Who would feel for this wretched servant!

If I prove to be a liar, you may, O heavenly God,
 Give me such unbearable torture as penalty
 As that given to one who enters the snakes' assembly
 Pretending to be master of the *Sabara* spell;

But if I'm proved true, may I be given a betel leaf
 As recognition of my truth among the judges,
 For Tulsidasa is a chataka-bird whose only hope
 Lies in the dark-cloud, Rama!

Rama's slave, I was given the name Rambola by Rama.

This is my work: I sometimes call out his name just once or twice;

He keeps me in food and drink and clothing well

While for the future, the Veda do tell

My lot will be good, from it I have joy and content.

Once I was bound hard by my stupid karmas,

By deep and obscure shackles of pride.

The anguish that I suffered was unbearable even to hear of it.

Then it was that the Lord of the afflicted and the orphans,

The Lord of Koshala, the compassionate gracious one, looked on me,

The wretched one burning in sins, and set me free at once.

As soon as he knew, I said to him:

"It's I, sir, I wish to be your servant, for I have none Anywhere, I cling to your feet, O Lord"

Then the Guru touched by back, caressing me, took my arms,

And making me his own, he spoke to me.

Since that time, O you who bring comfort to your servant,

Have I ever sung your praise.

People call me vile, but for this I have no sorrow,

Nor does it shame me,

For I want neither to marry, nor do I long for caste or rank,

Tulsidasa's weal and woe all depend

On whether Rama is pleased or annoyed,

So do I rest content and joyful, having faith in his love.

77

You, Rama, are the life of Janaki, the life of the world,
You're the world's weal, the lord of Raghu's line, O lotus-eyed Rama,
Your face like the autumn moon, you are joy-giving by nature,
The home of Lakshmi, your body is naturally beautiful,
With the splendour of unnumbered Love-gods.
You're the world's good father, good mother, good teacher,
You're the world's good support, its good friend too,
The friend of the poor, you are propitious to all, adverse to none,
You dispel all affliction, give refuge, an incomparably generous giver,
You nourish your humble devotees, being gracious and compassionate,
Your Name lifts the fallen, makes them pure and holy,
You're the adored one of all the world, served by all the gods,
It's your virtues that the Veda and other holy books extol—
Having known all this has Tulsidasa become your servant,
Would you then reckon him a stranger, as one separate,
Or would you count him as one among your poor slaves?

78

There's none so generous a giver to the wretched,
Whomsoever I tell of my own wretchedness, I find
him wretched too!

Gods, men, sages, demons, Nagas, there are so many
masters,

But they're all so only until your eye is not turned
away from 'em,

Well-known is it in the three worlds, in all three
times,

The four Vedas declare it too:

Your lordship, O Rama, is throughout, in the
beginning, middle and end,

The beggar who begged from you, never was he
called a beggar ever after.

Having heard of your great fame, gracious ways,
and your nature—

You made even the stone and tree, bird and beast,
all your own,—

O King Dasharath's son, you've turned paupers into
princes,

Gracious to the poor are you, and your poor wretch
am I

Just say but once, O Compassionate one, 'Tulsidasa
is mine!'

79

You're full of bounty and I am poor,

You a bountiful giver and a beggar am I,

I'm a well-known sinner, you do away with many a
sin,

You the master of those without master,

And who is more without a master than I?

No other for doing away with affliction like you.

You are Brahman and I'm a soul in bondage,

You the Master and I your slave:
 Father, mother, teacher, friend, you're all to me,
 My benefactor in every way.
 You and I have many a bond, take whichever you
 fancy.
 One way or another, O gracious one,
 Tulsidasa may gain the refuge of your feet.

80

Whom else to beg from? Who else puts an end to
 my begging?
 Who is a giver of that which is longed for?
 Who does away with all affliction and poverty?
 O Rama, you're the home of Dharma, beautiful as
 ten million Love-gods,
 The good master in all ways, warrior with the sword
 of bounty.
 During days of prosperity, the big drum is played
 At every door for two days on end,
 But in times of adversity, O you son of Dasharatha,
 You alone care for the poor wretched ones.
 Whosoever opened up and spoke to you of his
 poverty—
 Even though of no service to you, and worthless—
 They have all been richly rewarded,
 They've all been found going about rejoicing,
 Says Tulsidasa, know the beggar's desire and give
 alms accordingly,
 O Ramachandra, you are indeed the moon,
 Make me your chataka-bird!

81

O you compassionate lord of Raghu's line, you are
 the friend of the poor,

Ocean of joy, mine of graciousness and compassion,
 Listen O Lord, my mind is burning with the three
 fevers,
 It acts like one gone out of his mind, wandering;
 Sometimes intent on Yoga, sometimes obsessed with
 sensual enjoyments,
 Sometimes the stupidly obstinate one, separated from
 the loved one, is overwhelmed,
 Sometimes overpowered by delusion, it indulges in
 spiteful acts.
 Sometimes moved exceedingly by pity,
 A poor mindless wretch sometimes, an absolute
 pauper,
 While sometimes it is a proud haughty king;
 Sometimes a fool and sometimes a pandit caught in
 contradictions,
 And sometimes an enlightened one immersed in
 dharma;
 Sometimes O Lord, it sees the world as full of wealth,
 Sometimes full of enemies, sometimes it seems all
 women—
 This terrible affliction, this anguish of the delirium
 of existence,
 O it cannot be calmed down without the Lord's
 grace.
 Even though self-control, austerities, repetition of
 mantras,
 Observance of vows and practice of dharma are so
 many remedies,
 Yet O Tulsidasa, this disease of existence does not
 leave
 Without the love of Rama's feet.

O these accretions of filth born of the spell of
 delusion:

They cannot be washed away even by millions of different kinds of efforts.

The consciousness intent on it through habit in lifetime after lifetime,

It gets more and more caught up in its meshes.

The sight is made filthy from looking longingly on other men's wives,

The mind with the objects of the senses;

The heart is filthy with lust, pride and delusion,

The soul having lost its innate natural joy,

The hearing filthy from listening to others being maligned,

And speech from reciting the faults and foibles of others.

All this filth is heaped in all ways

Through forgetting the love for my own true Lord's feet.

O Tulsidasa, the Veda tells of vows, alms, austerities and wisdom,

Yet without the water of devotion to the feet of Rama,

This heavy accretion of filth of all sorts cannot be washed clean.

83

It's all come to nothing, being born: this lifetime has been in vain:

Having received this human body, exceedingly hard to obtain,

I did not sing praise of Rama, never gave up dissembling,

Never did I give myself to Rama's love in thought, word and deed!

Childhood I passed in a stupid, thoughtless state,

Being exceedingly fickle, going here, there,
 everywhere,
 In the fever of youth, the misdiet of the young
 woman
 Brought on the triple disorder, filled with wind of
 lust,
 The middle years were wasted in the pursuit of
 wealth,
 In farming and other ventures, commercial and
 otherwise,
 Turned away from Rama, I found no comfort, not
 even in dreams,
 Night and day I burnt in the three fires;
 I did not serve with devotion the servants of Sita's
 Lord, nor the good saints,
 I neither listened to Rama's deeds being sung, with
 body trembling with emotion,
 Nor did I recite them with heart full of joy.
 Now that age has broken my limbs, I am sore afflicted
 Like the serpent bereft of its jewel!
 Now do I beat my head again and again in regret,
 wringing my hands,
 With no friend to help quench this insupportable
 fire!
 Those for whom I threw away my future in the
 world to come,
 They are all ashamed even to stand by my side!
 O Tulsidasa, remember the lord of Raghu's line even
 today,
 Whose Name remembered just once rescued
 the elephant-king from the ocean of existence.

84

O my mind, you'll be filled with regret then,
wringing your hands!

This body, hard to obtain even for the Immortals,
It came easily to you: realize it then, why do you
lose it in vain?

With your face turned away from the Lord Hari,
the means of pleasure are no good,

Even as the labour of churning water to make ghee!
Think it over then, giving up the wrong path, the
evil company,

Take the right way, joining the company of the good
people.

Behold Rama's devotees, hearing the praise of his
glories being sung

Let into your heart, repeating his Name, the Lord
with bow and arrows in hand,

In the garb of ascetics, girded at the waist with the
quiver!

O Tulsidasa, abandon all deceptions and bow down
your head

Before the lotus-feet of Rama.

Fear not, for Janaki's Lord has made his own
Many a vile one like you yourself.

85

O my mind, gaze at Madhava a little!

Listen, O you fool, remember the Lord each and
every moment,

Like the pauper who guards what little he has.

The home of splendour, graciousness, virtue and
wisdom,

He is beautiful, he is supremely bountiful,

Bringing comfort to his saints, doing away with all
evil,

110 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Crushing all the evil forces arising from the object
of the senses.

If you want to cross over the ocean of existence
Without all the vows and the practice of self-restraint,
Then, O Tulsidasa, never forget for a moment, night
and day,
Ever remember the lotus-feet of the Lord, Rama.

86

Suniti's Words to Her Son Dhruva the Devotee
"This, O my son, this is what the four Vedas have
taught:

There is no other place anywhere for man
Except for meditating upon the Lord, Sri Raghuvara's
feet

By serving whom Brahma and Shiva too had their
Siddhis.

Even today sages like Shuka, Sanaka, Sanandana and
others

Go about freely, singing his praises;
Even though Sri, the goddess of fortune, is ever
most fickle,

Nowhere staying stable, yet having attained to his
lotus-feet,

She has become forever fixed, in thought, word and
deed.

The ocean of compassion, the wishing-jewel for his
devotees,

In serving whom lies all splendour.

Bitten are the rest of the gods and demon-kings by
the six serpents,

O my son, what your stepmother Suruchi told you
is true

Even though her words are most harsh and bitter!"

O Tulsidasa, he who turns away from the lord
Raghunath,
Never is he set free from his great affliction, this
calamity of existence.

87

O my deluded mind, listen to my counsel.
No one who has set himself against the Lord's feet
ever found happiness,
Realize this truth early, O you wretch!
Ever since the sun and the moon parted with the
Lord's eye and mind,
They continue to suffer many an affliction:
Day and night do they traverse wearily through the
skies
Where their formidable foe, Rahu, dwells.
Although the Ganga, the river of the gods, is most
holy,
With her great renown resounding through the three
worlds,
Yet to this day, never has her flow ceased.
There's no freedom from calamity without singing
Raghupati's praise,
The Veda has left no doubt about it at all.
So has Tulsidasa become Rama's slave,
Abandoning all other hopes.

88

O my mind, you have never given yourself rest:
Night and day you wandered about, forgetting your
inward joy
Here, there, everywhere, wherever your senses
pulled you.
Although you've suffered unbearable affliction,

112 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Becoming ensnared in a terrible poisonous net,
 Yet O fool, you do not give it up out of your
 attachment to it;

Even though you knew it within, you remained as if
 uncomprehending.

Your consciousness is all steeped in filth arising from
 acts

Of many kinds through many a lifetime.

As the Veda and the Puranas have described,

It cannot be cleansed without the water of
 discrimination.

You haven't brought the Lord into your heart joyfully,
 He who is your true Lord, your friend, your father
 and your Guru.

O Tulsidasa, how should your thirst be quenched
 When you passed your whole life digging the pond
 of water!

89

O Lord, my mind does not give up its obstinate
 insistence!

Night and day, my Master, I teach it in many ways,
 But still it acts according to its own nature,

Like to the young woman who experiences
 excruciating labour pains,

And yet the stupid one consents to make love to her
 husband,

Forgetting the anguish, and becoming agreeable to
 him, the vile one;

Like to the greedy house-dog who gets beaten with
 shoes

As he wanders here and there, and yet,

He goes the same way again, never is he ashamed!

My mind is exceedingly powerful, it is indomitable!

O Tulsidasa, it will be brought under control
Only when the Lord, the Mover, holds it back.

90

Such is the folly of this my mind!
Abandoning the heavenly river of devotion to Rama,
It puts its hope on dewdrops to quench its thirst,
Like the thirsty chataka-bird looking on a cloud of
smoke,
Taking it for a rain-bearing cloud, but finding there
Neither coolness nor water, but only ruin for its
eyes!
Like to the stupid hawk, seeing its own image in a
glazed floor,
And attacks it, driven by hunger, being most eager
for food,
Forgetting the damage to its beak!
How far can I tell, O you home of grace, of its
misdeeds!
You know well the ways of your servant.
Take away, O Lord, my insufferable anguish,
says Tulsidasa,
Be mindful of your own vow to save your devotees.

91

Day and night, it has been dancing!
Ever since it was given the name of 'Jiva', O Lord',
it hasn't been stable ever,
Dressed in many kinds of bodices and jewellery like
greed and all,
What costume of disguise hasn't it taken, moving
and still,
Everywhere on the earth, in the air and on waters?

None among gods, Danujas, sages, Nagas and men
 there are
 Whom it has not begged from,
 And yet not one among them all has dispelled
 My insufferable poverty, sin and sorrow.
 Tired are my eyes, my feet, hands, mind and
 strength,
 Separated am I from all my friends and companions—
 Now his servant has come to Raghunath seeking
 refuge,
 Being bewildered and sore terrified by the fear of
 existence.
 All the virtues which would win the Lord,
 I have forgotten them all, let Tulsidasa remain, lying
 At your palace gate, Lord!

92

O Madhava, O Sir, none is as stupid as I!
 Even though the fish and the moth are mindless,
 Yet even they are not as far gone as I.
 Under the spell of the lovely form and food,
 They recognize not the lamp's flame or the iron
 hook.
 Thus, being a fool even greater than either of them,
 I've ever been floundering in the boundless river of
 great delusion;
 Giving up the boat of the Lord's lotus-feet,
 Again and again have I caught at the foam-flakes,
 Like to a most hungry dog that grasps with his
 mouth some old bone,
 And licking the blood that oozes from his own palate,
 He contents himself;
 Caught in the coils of the most cruel snake of
 existence,

I am taken by great terror,
 I seek refuge with a frog to rid myself from fear,
 Forgetting the eagle-riding Lord!
 The shoal of fishes and other creatures of the water
 caught in a net,
 Find themselves pressed in together near one another,
 But still, driven by greed, they eat one another,
 Blind to the destruction that approaches them all!
 Even though Sharada herself were to count my evils
 for many ages,
 Yet she could not get to the end.
 O Tulsidasa, only the faith arises in my heart,
 sustaining me,
 That my Lord is the redeemer of the fallen ones.

93

O Rama, where have you forgotten that mercy
 Which brings you hastening from your place the
 moment you hear
 With your ears the cries of the poor and wretched
 for compassion?
 When the elephant-king thought over his own
 powers,
 And admitting his defeat, he surrendered to your
 feet,
 Hearing his piteous cry, you left your mount, the
 lord of birds,
 And delayed not, speeding towards the stricken one.
 You kept the vow of Prahlada, afflicted day and
 night By Diti's son's terrors:
 The Veda bears witness how you killed the demon
 Hiranyakasipu,
 Manifesting Yourself with incomparable might as
 the Lion-man!

116 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

When, in the assembly of kings, Arjuna's wife, having
 looked to them all,
 Called out to you, crying, 'Save me, O Lord!'
 You bestowed upon her your great mercy, O you
 enemy of demons,
 Providing her with unending clothing, and crushed
 the enemy's pride.

O Raghuvira, you saved all your devotees then,
 When they were terrorized by just one foe each,
 But now, when so many afflict me with insufferable
 troubles,

Why do you not take away my suffering of existence?
 Here I'm being attacked by the greed, crocodile,
 By the anger, demon, and the lust, Duhshasana, all
 together!

O noble Rama, O Lord, says Tulsidasa,
 Destroy this terrible affliction of mine!

94

Why, O Lord, did you forget me?
 Well did you know your own greatness and my
 sins,

Yet O Lord, you haven't taken care of me!
 The four Vedas call you the redeemer of the fallen
 ones,

The friend of the poor, and the refuge of those who
 have none;

Am I not lowly, wretched and terrified?

Or else, the declarations of the Veda false?

At first, O Lord, you seated me in a row with the
 bird,

With the prostitute, with the elephant and the hunter,
 But now, O home of compassion, while serving, for
 what shame

Do you tear away the leaf-plate that's been served to me?

Had the age of Kali been more powerful than you
And independent of your direction, O Lord,
Then I'd have given up my faith in you, my trust in you,

And without making fuss over blaming you and being angry with you,

I'd have sung the praise of Kali instead.

But your light can make a mosquito into Brahma,
Or make even the Creator himself equal to a mosquito,

And yet, despite this great power, you forsake me,
Where then, O Lord, is my redress?

I have no fear of falling into hell,

Even though I am defeated in every way,

My great fear, O my Lord, being that your Name hasn't burnt down my sins!

95

Though the lord of death were to abandon all his other duties,

And to apply his mind to this alone,

He could not count my sins, my evil deeds,

For, in that case, the rest of the host of sinners,

They would escape and be on the run,

And he'd find himself caught between the horns of a dilemma,

Realising that the powers of his office were being violated!

He would then speak to the Lord of my great goodness,

The Lord would smile and believe the devotee,

Treating me as the crest-jewel among his servants.

One way or another, then, O Lord of Koshala,
 You would have no option left to you
 But to make me your very own!

96

If, O Lord, you would give heed to your servant's faults,
 How then can I possibly cut down the forest
 Of the huge mass of my evil deeds with the bare
 nails of my few good deeds?
 Who can tell the evil deeds I've done, in thought,
 word and deed?
 Unnumbered Sheshas, Sharadas and Vedas fail to
 tell those of a single moment.
 If the greatness of your Name enters into your
 thought,
 And the host of virtues of your vow to redeem the
 fallen,
 Then you will take Tulsidasa across the ocean of
 existence.
 Breaking the teeth of the servants of the lord of
 death
 Even as you did in the case of the brahman Ajamil.

97

If you, the Lord, had paid heed to your servants'
 faults,
 Why then would you have insisted on making
 enemies
 Of Indra, of the Kuru King Duryodhana and the
 Vanara-chief Bāli?
 If you hadn't wanted love alone, setting aside
 sacrifices, *japa*, vows and yoga,
 Why then would you have left gods and sages all

To go and live in the cowherd's home in Braja?
 If you, Lord, hadn't declared the power of singing
 your praise with love,
 Having here, there, everywhere, keeping your
 devotees' vows,
 Then how could stupid ones like me have managed
 to survive
 On the difficult road of karma, during this age of
 Kali?
 If Ajamil's countless evils hadn't been burnt up
 Only on calling out your Name, by calling for his
 son,
 Then would Death's servants have hunted for
 bullocks like us
 And yoked us all to the plough of torments?
 If you hadn't had the most excellent fame
 Of being the redeemer of the fallen, known the
 world over,
 Then, O Lord, crooked sinners like Tulsidasa
 wouldn't find liberation,
 No, not even in their dreams, for many aeons!

98

Such is the Lord's love for His slave,
 That, forgetting His own lordship, He becomes
 subject to him—
 This indeed is ever your rule.
 He who has bound all with the strong rope of karma,
 Gods, demons, men, Nagas, all of them, firmly,
 That same Brahman, the indivisible One, Yashoda so
 firmly bound,
 That He could not escape from it!
 By whose power of *Maya* dance Brahma and Shiva,
 without fathoming Him,

Him the cowherd women made to dance
Quite a dance to the beat of the clapping of their
hands!
The Veda reveals the law that He is the sustainer of
the universe,
The Lord of Sri, and the Master of the three worlds,
Yet He couldn't lord it over His servant Bali, the
demon-king:
He'd rather beg for alms from him, becoming the
brahman boy, the Dwarf!
By calling on whose Name, one is set free from the
burden of affliction
Of this existence, of birth and death in this world,
That very storehouse of compassion was born ten
times over
For His devotee Ambarisha's sake!
He who is sought for by the sages and enlightened
ones,
Practising yoga, renunciation, meditation, *japa* and
austerities,
That Lord bore love for bears and monkeys,
For mere lowly and fickle beasts.
He whose commands are obeyed by all the world-
guardians,
By Wind, Sun, Moon, even by Time, and the lord of
death;
That Lord, says Tulsidasa, made Himself a door-
keeper,
Waiting at Ugrasen's door with a cane in his hand!

Rama is renowned for being gracious to the poor.
The Veda and the Puranas, Shiva and the sage Shuka
sing it,

And the power of His Name is manifest.
Who were Dhruva and Prahlad, Vibhishana and
Sugriva,
The Stone and the tree, the Pandavas and Sudama,
what were they worth?
Yet they achieved glory in this world and a good
place hereafter;
Who among them all was of any service to the Lord,
to Rama?
Who were more evil than the prostitute, Guha and
the tribal chief,
And he who came to be the first among poets?
When did the brahman Ajamil perform the
Ashwamedha sacrifice?
When did the elephant-king recite the Sama Veda?
Who is so crooked, filthy and wretched, lean and
thin and woe-begone
And feeble in every limb as Tulsidasa?
Yet such is the power and splendour of that king,
His Name,
That it sets the leather coin in currency
In the world, in this age of Kali!

100

Having heard of the noble nature, the gracious ways
of Sita's lord,
He whose heart is not full, whose body doesn't
thrill with joy,
Whose eyes do not fill with tears—
That man should go about eating dust, and rightly
so.
From infancy his parents, friends and teacher,
His servants, ministers and companions, all would
say:

'No one has ever seen Rama's moon-face angered,
nay, not even in dreams,
His brothers and the other boys who played
everyday with Him,
He would always think of them, their pranks and
their hurts,
And cherished them ever, He'd admit defeat even if
He'd won,
Petted and caressed them with love, and gave to
each one
A winning chance, or see that someone else gave it;
The moment it was touched by His holy foot,
The stone, Ahalya petrified, was released from the
affliction of her curse,
He gave her deliverance, yet He felt no gratification
in his heart
But only regretted that He had with his foot touched
her;
Rama, having broken Shiva's bow, having crushed
the gathered rulers' pride,
When Parashurama appeared all consumed with
anger,
He forgave his fault, got him pardoned and fell at
his feet,
Nowhere else is such forbearance seen.
The king promised him the kingdom, but exiled Him
to the forest instead,
All under the influence of Woman, and died of
remorse,
Yet He cared for the feelings of such a wicked
mother,
Like someone who cares for a wound in a vital spot
of his own body
When He grew beholden to Hanuman for what he'd
done for him,

He said: 'Come, O son of Wind, I have nothing to give you,

You're my creditor, get me to sign a bond for you!
Even though they hadn't left the shadow of their ways of deceit,

He chose to make Sugriva and Vibhishana his own:
In every assembly He'd openly praise and give honour to Bharata,

And yet He wasn't satisfied with it in his heart.

Any mention of His own compassion or acts of assistance to His servants

Makes Him, as it were, sink in shame:

And yet, if anyone salutes Him and takes His refuge,
He praises him ever, listens to him, asking their praise to be sung again.

Having appreciated again and again Rama's host of gracious ways

My heart is flooded with more and more love!

O Tulsidasa, with such an efflux of love for Him,

You will have the gift of love for Rama's feet

Without any effort on your own part.

101

Where should I go for refuge, save to your feet?

Who else in the world is known as the fallen ones' redeemer?

To whom else are the most wretched poor ones so very dear?

What other divine lord insists on saving sinner after sinner

For the sake of the glory and greatness of His Name?

What other god has saved bird and beast, tree and stone?

Even the hunter and the alien, the barbarian?

Gods and Danujas, sages, Nagas and men,
They're all poor pitiful creatures, being subject to
Maya!

Wherefore, then, O Lord, one should surrender his
self to them?

102

O Lord, you've been most gracious:
You've given me, by your grace, this human body,
This place of pursuits, difficult even for the gods to
secure.

Even a million tongues cannot tell a single one
Of the myriad good turns the Lord has done to me,
Yet O Lord, I have some more favour to ask of you,
O most gracious One, grant it to me!

Like to a fish that can't live even for an instant out
of water,

This mind can't escape ever from the objects of the
senses,

From it I suffer most terrible calamities, being born
into many wombs.

With the line of your grace, your feet as hook,

With the sweet bait of your supreme love,

Hasten to take away my anguish in this manner, O
Rama,

It will just be your sport divine;

The Veda has spoken of all the remedies, and yet,

Which gods, from one to another, may this wretched
one entreat?

O Tulsidasa, only the One who bound the *jiva*

With the rope of delusion, sets it free.

103

This is my entreaty, O Raghuvira, the Lord of the
senses:

Take away the stupid soul's other faith, hopes and beliefs!

I have no desire for any wealth, intellect or a heavenly state,

Nor for *Siddhis*, riches, nor yet for achieving greatness,

Only may my selfless love for Rama's feet grow more intense every day.

Wherever my evil karmas dispose me by their force,

There I may not forsake your love even for an instant,

Just as the mother-turtle doesn't ever leave her eggs!

And wherever in this world may this body be bound in love and faith,

May they all be for the Lord, O Tulsidasa,

May they be gathered in one place.

104

To the Lord of Janaki's life do I offer myself!

My inner voice tells me I shall go nowhere else now

Leaving the refuge of the feet of Rama's and Sita's.

In my heart has arisen the faith that I'll have no joy,

Nay, not even in dreams, away from the Lord's feet.

I shall teach all the senses dwelling in this body, including the mind,

With my ears I shall hear no other tale,

Nor sing with my tongue any other song now!

I'll keep my eyes from seeing anyone else,

I'll bow down my head before the Lord alone!

Having made my bond of love with my Lord alone,

I'll break off all other bonds of love and kinship!

O Tulsidasa, the One in the world whose slave I shall be called,

He shall bear the burden of all my karmas now on.

105

So long I've wasted my time, now no more!
 Through Rama's grace, the night of existence has
 passed,
 Now that I am awake, I'll make my bed no more!
 The lovely jewel of thought I have found—your
 Name—
 I'll not let it drop from my hands, that is, my heart:
 With that pure, dark lovely form as touchstone,
 Shall I test the gold of my consciousness.
 Knowing me to be under the power of others, the
 sense-objects,
 These sense-organs of mine, mocked at me so long,
 Now that I am my own master, I'll not be laughed
 at.
 Says Tulsidasa, I'll take a vow to make my mind's
 bee
 To fly to Rama's feet as its dwelling-place!

106

Blessed is the one whom King Rama has honoured!
 Indeed there's no other like him, great mass of
 virtues,
 Omniscient, accomplished, gallant, home of nobility
 and grace and saintly,
 The Stone, the boatman, the monkey, the bear, Sabari
 and the vulture,
 They were all without restraint and peace, mercy
 and generosity,
 Yet when they took Rama's Name, he made them all
 most pure and holy.
 So now men who sing their praises,
 They're carried across the ocean of existence.
 What crimes did the hunter leave unattempted?

When did the prostitute Pingala give her mind to devotion?

What Soma sacrifice did the base Ajamil perform?

What Vajapeya sacrifice was made by the elephant-king?

What trace of holiness was there in the Pandavas,
In Vidur, in the Gopis, in Kubja and in Sabari?

Yet the Lord made them all pure and holy:

Seeing their love, Krishna made each one his own,
So now their renown in the world is like that of
Vishnu and Shiva!

The Kol, the Khas, the Bhil, the Yavan and others,
Who among all those vile ones having uttered Rama's
Name,

Was not raised to a high place?

The destroyer of the sorrows of the wretched,
Lakshmi's Lord,

Home of compassion, redeemer of the fallen, whose
praise the Veda sings,

There's been no one in the three worlds, in past,
present and to come,

One as dull-witted, crooked, chief among vile ones
as Tulsidasa;

Yet, remembering His own vow, recognising His
Name's obligation,

He took this one up, gave him his refuge even
though seized

By the serpent of the age of Kali!

107

Noble indeed is my God, Rama, the Lord of Koshala!
Like the lovely lotus are his eyes, beautiful is his
dark form,

Splendid with Sita ever, with the beauty of countless
Love-gods,

128 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Holding in his long arms a bow and arrows, a fine
quiver at his waist.

No sacrifice does he want, no worship, all he wants
is love,

If only one remembers him, he's pleased, all his
ways are holy.

He brings all joys, burns up all anguish, He is the
friend of those in distress,

Such an ocean of compassion, He sees virtues only,
dispelling all faults and evil,

The Veda and the Puranas speak of him as pervading
all lands and time,

Lord of all, dwelling in every heart, he knows each
one's destiny!

Who with myriads of desires would worship so many
gods?

O Tulsidasa, serve Him alone whom Shiva himself
serves.

108

O adore the great warrior whose pursuit brings
Siddhis,

Who fulfils all desires, as everyone knows.

Hasten then, delay not, take instruction,

Repeat the *bija mantra* which Shiva repeats.

Make the excellent offering of the water of love,

And with the ghee of spontaneous affection,

Make the fuel of doubts and misgivings,

The fire of forgiveness, and make the sense of 'me
and mine' the offering.

This drives away your thoughts from sins, brings
the mind under control,

It destroys lust and evil, attracts joy and riches,
contentment and good thoughts.

Whoever has sung His praise in this manner has
found Raghupati,
Tulsidasa has taken the Lord's way on which He'll
sustain him to the end.

109

Wherefore do you not melt with compassion, Lord,
O dispeller of suffering, O Murari!
The dispeller of three fevers, of doubts, sorrows,
misgivings and fears!
While my mind is dulled and soiled with the filth
and misgivings brought forth by Kali,
If the Lord doesn't take care, how then can His
servant survive?
You, O Lord, are in all ways strong, and in all ways
am I wretched!
If, knowing this, you melt not with compassion for
me,
Then it appears that I am without fortune, having
no past good deeds.
Though wandering through many births,
yet O Raghupati,
I have had no other master,
And though I suffer pains and pleasures,
Yet will I ever come to you for refuge,
There's no god as merciful as you, this I know within
me,
Yet O Lord, Tulsidasa has not the means
By which he should please you!

110

O home of mercy, tell me whom else should I tell
Of this terrible calamity, born of existence?
All my senses are ever restless, each engaged in its
natural object,

All the time wanting comfort and riches, ever after
 Heaven or hell, pursuing them,
 And my helpless mind leaving you, follows them.
 I was most wretched, and hearing that you, Lord,
 were compassionate
 My mind was filled with love for you.
 If then, O steadfast Lord Raghuvira, you melt not
 with compassion,
 How shall I not be grieved?
 Even though I am a house of sins,
 Yet O Murari, you are the dispeller of grief.
 Tulsidasa has hope, for you have redeemed
 so many fallen ones.

111

O Keshava, O Lord, What should I tell, it cannot be
 told.
 Looking on your strange creation, O Lord, having
 understood it,
 One can simply contemplate it within one's mind in
 silence.
 It's as though a picture painted on the wall of the
 void
 With no colour, by an artist devoid of body,
 It will not be erased, however one washes it,
 One is filled with horror, looking on it brings only
 sorrow.
 It's as though among the waters of the sun's rays
 Dwells a most terrible creature in the form of a
 crocodile,
 Though without a mouth, it grasps whoever goes
 there,
 Both moving and inanimate creatures, to drink from
 it.

Some say it's all real, some say it's unreal,
 While some others hold that both are equally true
 and powerful.
 Says Tulsidasa, whoever gives up all three
 misconceptions,
 He alone recognises his true self!

112

O Keshava, O you lord of the senses, for what reason,
 For what wrong of mine, knowing me to be
 incorrigible,
 You left me as though I were a stranger?
 If you took as your own only the purest saints with
 gentle hearts,
 How then did you save the brahman, the hunter
 and even the harlot?
 Were they too bound to you in some sort of kinship?
 The karma, time, the liberation or otherwise of a
jiva,
 All, O Lord, are in your power.
 Do something, then, O Lord, take away my delusion
 of 'me and mine'
 So that I shouldn't wander about, forgetting you,
 Even though you may give me up,
 Yet will I worship no other lord,
 This is my vow that cannot be shaken.
 Wheresoever I may find myself, in heaven or hell,
 I shall entreat you in thought, word and deed,
 Although it's not right that I should importune you,
 Lord,
 Yet is Tulsidasa agonized night and day,
 To see your cruelty to me.

113

O Madhava, on what score do you not melt for me now?

It's your vow to protect those who bow down to you,

And its mine to live with my eyes beholding your lotus-feet.

For as long as I wasn't turned lowly, and you not merciful,

As long as I'd not become your slave, nor you my master,

Although you know all that is in one's mind,

I didn't tell you all the sorrows that I suffered so long,

You're generous and I am miserable, you holy

And fallen am I, so the Veda sings,

Between you and me are many bonds,

It isn't seemly for you to abandon me.

You're my father and mother, guru, brother, friend and master, every way my benefactor,

Think then of some way so that I mayn't go down the dark well of duality.

Listen, O you lotus-eyed Lord with infinite compassion,

You who deliver one from the great dread of existence,

Says Tulsidasa, without light from you,

One's doubts can never be warded off, however hard one may try.

114

O Madhava, there's no one in the world like me, without all means,

Most wretched, filthy, and immersed in the objects of the senses,

Nor is there One like you, compassionate without
 cause,
 A lord who gives up all for the sake of the afflicted
 ones.
 I'm sore troubled by sorrows and grief, O gracious
 one,
 Why then do you not feel compassion for me?
 It's no fault of yours, I admit, the wrong's all my
 own,
 O my Lord, you gave me this body, home of wisdom,
 Having it I still didn't recognize the Lord!
 The bamboo puts blame on the sandalwood, and the
 karil, the spring,
 But how can the one give forth fragrance, how can
 new leaves come to the other?
 In all ways am I hard, and you are tender,
 Such is the conviction that arises in me,
 Says Tulsidasa, the shackles of delusion will be taken
 off
 Only when you, Lord, set me free!

115

O Madhava, how shall this noose of delusion be
 broken?
 Even though one tries ten million means on the
 outside,
 Yet the knot within is not untied!
 Just as the moon's reflection seen in a large pan
 filled with ghee
 It can't be removed even if it is boiled
 With fuel and fire even as long as a hundred aeons;
 Like to a bird dwelling in the hollow of a tree,
 It can't be killed by felling the tree,
 Just so, by such means, without thought, the mind
 can't be made pure.

134 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

If the inner consciousness is most filthy with
 attachment to sense-objects,
 Washing the body wouldn't make it clean.
 Just as a snake dwelling in its hole in an anthill
 It's not killed by hitting at the anthill in many ways,
 Says Tulsidasa, without the compassion of the Lord
 and the guru,
 Discrimination cannot be made pure,
 And without discrimination, none can cross over
 this terrible ocean of existence.

116

O Madhava, such is your *Maya*
 That whatsoever means one try, again and again,
 and yet again,
 Yet until you show your mercy, one may not cross
 over.
 One hears, contemplates, understands and explains,
 and yet
 That state doesn't enter the heart without
 experiencing which
 The terrible travails of existence, born of delusion,
 torment him.
 If only the mind could taste the cool sweet essence,
 the elixir of Brahman,
 Then why should it continue day and night to run
 after the mirage of sense-object?
 Why should he who has the pure wishing-jewel in
 his house collect pieces of glass?
 As in a dream one falls into another's power,
 But on waking, who need he implore for freedom?
 Many are the means like knowledge and devotion,
 all true, not false,

Yet, says Tulsidasa, the Lord's glance alone dispels delusion,

Such is the faith that I have in me.

117

O Lord, why should I blame you?

When day and night I employ the means by which
It's difficult to find liberation even in a dream!

Even though I know the sense-objects to be the very
form of calamity,

That through them I should go down a well of
darkness,

Yet I do not give them up, verily like a dog, a goat,
a donkey,

I wander after sense-objects, in love with them!

Under the spell of delusion, I set myself against all
creatures,

Never did I give thought to my own good.

Among those enemies of knowledge, intoxication,
selfishness and pride

Do I endlessly live and move.

Hearing the Veda and the Puranas, understanding
what they tell,

That the Lord of Raghu pervades the whole universe,
But like to the sandalwood scent that doesn't enter
the bamboo,

Just so is my hollow sinful mind that has no core.

I'm an ocean of sins, O you mine of compassion,

You know all that goes on within;

Bitten by the snake of existence, Tulsidasa seeks
your refuge,

O Lord, who rides the Garuda, the foe of the snake.

118

O Lord, by taking what care would you be pleased?
My doings are all like the elephant's tusks, mere
outward show,

You know it perfectly well!

If only I do whatever I say, I might then cross
The ocean of existence as if it were a mere calf's
hoof-print,

But I speak one way and live another,

How then should I ever have the joy at the Lord's
feet?

The pea-cock is lovely to look at, with a nectar-
sweet voice, so auspicious,

Yet its food is the poisonous snake, it's so cruel,
Such are its deeds, and such is its voice!

O Raghuvira, O Lord, only those are dear to you
Who love all creatures, are without jealousy, in love
with your lotus-feet,

Having altogether given up the distinction between
oneself and another;

They are steadfast in their minds.

Although my vices are countless, O Lord, I'm fit for
the round of birth and death

Yet, O home of compassion, think over your own
virtues, Have mercy on Tulsidasa!

119

O Lord, by what means will one's delusion be driven
away?

One sees, hears and thinks, yet this mind doesn't
give up its nature.

Devotion, Knowledge and dispassion, all these are
means to pursue this end,

Yet desires such as 'May someone speak well of me',
Or 'May someone give me something', do not leave
one's heart.

In this night of delusion, when all creatures sleep,
Your servants whom you grace keep awake.

Seeing my deeds perverse, and understanding this,
I'm struck by a mighty fear!

Although one's heart's desires are broken by fate,
Yet seeking happiness, one only meets sorrows,
Like to an artist seeking to paint without hands to
meet his selfish ends;

I offer myself to you, Lord—a great faith has arisen
in my heart.

O Lord, says Tulisidasa, the travails born of the
senses,

They'll leave only when you, Lord, take them away.

120

O Lord, why do you not take away this mighty
delusion?

Even though this world is unreal, yet it appears real
So long as your grace is withheld.

I know the world's wealth to be without reality,
Yet this cycle of birth and death does not break.

Through my own obstinacy, the fool that I am,
I've become a captive even though not bound, just
like a parrot.

As in a dream, many troubles come through disease,
as if one's dying,

Physicians may try many remedies, yet the anguish
wouldn't go

Unless one wakes up from the dream.

The Veda and the Smritis, gurus and saints, all agree
That this visible world is unreal and the source of
affliction,

138 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

But who can ward off the calamity
 Without giving it up and devoting oneself to the
 Lord of Raghu?
 The Veda sings in accents pure of many means to
 cross over,
 Yet, O Tulsidasa, unless the sense of 'I-and mine'
 leave one,
 Never can a soul find happiness.

121

O Lord, this is all owing to the excess of delusion,
 That even as one sees, hears, tells and understands,
 These doubts, these misgivings do not leave.
 But if this world is unreal, then tell us for what
 reason
 Do we experience the three types of burning?
 Just as the water of the mirage cannot be called
 true,
 Yet one suffers travails through delusion,
 Like to one who sleeps on a comfortable bed
 dreaming
 That he is drowning in the ocean and taken by fright,
 Yet until the moment he himself wakes up,
 Not even hundreds of thousands of boats will rescue
 him across.
 So only owing to ignorance does this most terrible
 world seem delightful,
 But it can bring happiness to those
 Who practise poise, content, mercy and
 discrimination.
 O Tulsidasa, though the Veda sings that all creation
 is false,
 Yet without devotion to the Lord of Raghu, and the
 company of saints,
 Who can get rid of the terrors of this existence?

122

O Lord, I know not how to practise the means to liberation.

The right medicine for the disease wasn't applied,
What then was the fault of the treatment given?

As in a dream, a king may happen to have killed a brahman,

And wanders around in affliction, with the grievous crime,

Though he perform a hundred million *Asvamedha* sacrifices,

Yet until he wakes, he isn't purged of it at all.

As one sees, without discerning, a large and awful serpent in a garland,

Though he attacks it with many weapons, with great force, exhausting himself,

Yet it is not killed;

As through one's own delusion, the water-mirage from the sun's rays,

It strikes great terror on a man drowning in it,

And though he mount a ship or boat, he can never reach the other shore.

Says Tulsidasa, as long as this world with 'I' isn't rooted out,

For so long, O my brother, though you try means for ten million aeons,

You'll keep on trying till you die, but you will not cross over.

123

This much do I seem to understand, O King Rama,
That without your grace, O merciful, O your slave's succour,

Neither delusion nor *Maya* can be done away with.

140 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Just because one is a great expert in words of knowledge,

One does not cross over existence, just as talking
About a lamp within a house in darkness at night
doesn't dispel darkness;

If he paint a picture of the wish-granting tree or the
desire-fulfilling cow,

It doesn't take away the misery of a man at all.

Just as someone should day and night describe
Many sorts of food, of all the six flavours, yet only
he

Who's eaten knows the pleasure arising from
contentment, even without talking.

As long the heart isn't enlightened with true
knowledge,

As long as the mind yearns for the objects of the
senses,

For so long, O Tulsidasa, one wanders through
wombs of existence

Bereft of comfort or happiness even in dreams.

124

If one's mind give up its ill effects,

How then can there be the travails of birth and
death,

Doubts and misgivings, boundless grieving born of
duality?

Enemy, friend and neutral the mind has created by
force,

One it avoids like a snake in the path, the second it
grasps like gold,

The third it pays no heed to like mere chaff or
grass.

Just as in the jewel reside food and clothing, cattle
and many sorts of things,

So too in the mind dwell heaven and hell, moving
and unmoving, indeed many worlds;

Like the puppet in the tree, and cloth in the thread,
Even though without being fashioned or woven out,
Just so is many a body latent in the mind,
manifesting as opportunity comes.

By the consciousness purified by the water of
devotion to the Lord

Even without effort, says Tulsidasa, this world,
The sport of consciousness, is realized only little by
little.

125

O Raghuvira, the steadfast One, my true benefactor
To whom else shall I tell of my awfully great
calamities?

My heart is ever your mansion, Lord, but many
thieves have come to dwell in it.

Most cruel are they, indulging in many acts of
violence,

They wouldn't listen to my prayers and entreaties:

Darkness of the mind, Delusion, Greed and Egoism,
Intoxication, Anger and Lust, the enemies of Reason,

They are committing many an outrage,

Knowing me to be an orphan, they trample upon
me!

I'm all alone while these highwaymen are
unnumbered,

And no one hears my cries, while O Lord, even
fleeing them will not save me!

O Lord, O you leader of the Raghu's Line, come to
my rescue,

Says Tulsidasa, listen O Rama, these thieves plunder
your house,

Unbounded is my anxiety lest your reputation be violated!

126

O my mind, listen to my counsel,
If you want for yourself devotion to the Lord,
Remember and bring into your heart the many acts
of the Lord.

In your interest indeed for your own good;
They alone serve Him who are wary of their egos,
Take sorrow and joy, praise and dishonour as equal,
Then alone will your misfortune be removed.

Listen, O obstinate fool, this body is already under
death's grasp,

Do not abuse anyone else for it!

Without such a way of thinking, says Tulsidasa,

Rama will not meet you

As long as you only pretend to be devoted to Him.

127

Well have I known that I do not love Rama's feet,
For, even in my dreams, dispassion doesn't enter
my mind.

Those who have true love for the Lord's feet,

They've given up all enjoyments

As though they were so many diseases.

When anyone is bitten by the serpent of lust,

Then the Neem of sense-objects tastes not bitter to
him,

Thinking thus, my heart is in a dilemma,

Some great new anxiety grows there everyday!

Says Tulsidasa, there is no other way,

When some day this misery will leave me,

It'll be through Rama's grace alone.

128

O my mind, remember with love Sita's Lord,
 There's no other way save the Lord's feet!
Japa and austerities, pilgrimage, Yoga and *Samadhi*,
 They're all there, but Reason being restive in the
 age of Kali,
 They're none of them without impediments and
 hurdles,
 Even holy deeds exhaust not sins and evil,
 But they keep growing ever
 Like the notorious demon, *Raktabija*!
 There's only one way to destroy these demons of
 sin,
 Says Tulsidasa, it is the goddess Kali of the Lord's
 compassion.

129

O sweet tongue, why do you not repeat Rama, Rama,
 Rama?
 Remembering which joy and merits increase, while
 evil and sins do wane,
 Without labour are the evil meshes of the age of
 Kali, bitter and dreadful, severed,
 Just as when the sun rises, the ranks of darkness do
 disappear.
 The practice of yoga, *japa*, and sacrifices, dispassion,
 austerities, visiting of holy places,
 They're all as though one were weaving a rope of
 dust-particles!
 To bind the masterful elephant of existence!
 Giving up remembrance of the lovely Name,
 thought's divine jewel,
 You're as though pining away for the cheap savouries
 of sense-objects!

Seeing this petty greed of yours does Tulsidasa chide
you thus.

130

Repeating Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama,
Do joy and fortune arise, Kali's sins and deceptions
hide away.

Tell me who ever gained mango-fruits by sowing
seeds of *babul*?

Do not throw away this human birth of yours for
nothing, engaging in mere silly gossiping and chatter.
Time and karma, the three *gunas* and nature scorch
all men's heads,

But they all go down at the mere mention of the
glory and greatness of Rama's Name!

People are restless, trying to obtain *Siddhis*, without
spiritual pursuits,

But the rich merchandise of Kali-age is spent in the
City of Rama's Name alone:

By love for and faith in the Name, the heart grows
firm and steadfast in devotion

For Ravana's foe, Rama, He's redeemed and made
holy even a fallen one like Tulsidasa!

131

The supreme gain of life is the pure and holy love of
the lotus-feet of Rama:

Taking the Name all dharmas are easily secured,
Yoga, sacrifices, discrimination, dispassion and acts
taught by the Veda,

Hard and bitter are they all to perform, though
sweet and soft to the hearing,

O Tulsidasa, having heard and known them all, do
not in delusion be led astray,

Rather take refuge in that Lord who cares for the honour of one and all.

132

Without love for the dearest One, Rama,
 A creature's life goes waste!
 That pleasure you regard as pleasure,
 Only consider how much indeed it is pleasure.
 Wherever you have been born, in whatever womb,
 In heaven, on earth, or down below in hell.
 There you have sought the pleasure of the senses,
 You've gained them too as was destined,
 Wherefore then are you all caught up in the snare,
 in delusion,
 All absorbed, as though in stitching up the torn
 heavens?
 Says Tulsidasa, why do you not sing praise
 of the good Lord,
 And drink the elixir of loving devotion?

133

I tell you time and time again, O dear,
 words helpful, true,
 Hearing, O my mind, considering and understanding,
 Why do you not take the good, easy road?
 Great and small, good and bad,
 Dwelling wherever in this world,
 Tell me, who's there that doesn't want his own well-
 being?
 From Brahma, the Creator, down to the tiniest insect
 that lives.
 All are pleased with pleasure, and burnt up by
 affliction.
 The Lord, like to a herdsman, binds His creatures.

Frees them, and yokes them again;
 Only consider the pleasures of the senses:
 They are like taking the burden upon one's head
 over to one's shoulders,
 Take it as such, O you fool, wherefore do you suffer
 these torments?
 Only think, whoever gained ghee by churning
 mirage-waters?
 Says Tulsidasa, seek refuge of the One
 From whom all obtain it!

134

This is why, O God, I call out to you time and time
 again, fallen at your door, because, O Lord, you
 take away The affliction of the wretched one,
 At the mere mention of his suffering.
 The world-guardians were all anguished for fear of
 Ravana,
 Did you, O Compassionate One, hesitate to take on
 the human body?
 By what means did Visvamitra, Ahalya and King
 Janaka,
 Consumed as they were all with the fire of anxiety,
 How did they attain what cooled them,
 I do not understand.
 The boatman, the vulture and Sabari weren't
 By nature devoted to your lotus-feet,
 Yet when they were face to face with you, O Lord,
 Even these bad trees brought forth good fruits!
 Sugriva the Vanara, and Vibhishana the demon,
 consumed with grief, through fraternal enmity,
 What service of theirs pleased you, O Rama, that
 You treated them as you would Bharata!
 Hanuman, son of Wind, became such a servant to
 you,

That you, Rama, were well content to favour.
 To one and all who take your Name.
 Knowing not well your ways is this world,
 Dying of affliction,
 For even such a one as Tulsidasa can cross over,
 Having taken your refuge, giving up all pretension!

135

(i)

You didn't love the loving Rama who has given you
 A body hard to attain even for the Immortals.
 He gave you birth in a good family, a beautiful
 body,
 The means to the four fruits of life
 By gaining which the wise attain the highest states
 of Shiva and Vishnu.
 This here is the land of Bharata, close by is
 The gods' river, Ganga,
 The land is good, and the company noble too,
 But O you of low mind, O coward, you wish
 The wishing-tree to bear poison-fruits!

(ii)

Realize even today, pay heed and listen to what'll
 lead You to your supreme good:
 He's your benefactor in this world too from whom
 comes your personal gain,
 The gain that is so very dear to you,
 But from whom does it come, who is it the Veda
 describes?
 Look, O you wretch, stop playing with the snakes
 of sense-objects,
 Know Him as the Lord, recognise Him through
 whose love

Father, mother, guru, master, your own self,
 Your wife, son, servant and companion are all dear
 to you,
 He's your benefactor for no reason whom you didn't
 recognise!

(iii)

He isn't far from you, your benefactor,
 Look, He is in your own heart!
 Remember Him, giving up all deceit,
 He's ever gracious,
 Showing His mercy, the kindly shade of His lotus-
 hands ever over His devotees;
 To all who worship and adore Him, He is devoted.
 The world's Lord, life of the soul, He sets the life of
 all in order,
 He who gave Vishnuhood to Vishnu, Brahmahood
 to Brahma, Shiva hood to Shiva,
 That One is Janaki's Lord, sweet is His image,
 Filled with bliss and auspiciousness!

(iv)

Though of rulers He's the greatest, yet noble are
 His ways, straight and handsome!
 Though hard to obtain through meditation even
 For Shiva,
 He rose to meet the boatman, embracing him
 With tears in His eyes, His body growing tender
 with love!
 Gods, *Siddhas*, sages and poets all say:
 'There's no one so dear as Raghuvira!'
 He made the bird Jatayu, Sabari the demoness,
 Bears and monkeys
 All greater, and more adored than even Himself!

(v)

When you take Him into your heart whose nature
 I've told,
 All your sorrows will be blotted out, and Rama
 Himself will take it well;
 Raghu's Lord will take it well when you bring your
 palms together
 And bow down your head before Him,
 And at the very instant, O Tulsidasa,
 You will find your life's fruit!
 Repeat therefore His name, make obeisance and sing
 His praise,
 Take Him into your heart and go about the world,
 Having made your mind the bee for the lotus-feet
 Of the world's Lord!

136

(i)

Since the *jiva* was estranged from the Lord,
 It has known the body as its home.
 Under the spell of *Maya* it has forgotten its true
 form,
 And through this delusion, it has suffered terrible
 insufferable affliction,
 Even in dreams it found not a crumb of comfort!
 O my soul, you've obstinately trodden the very path
 On which lay many sorrows, the many
 Throes of Existence;
 Into many wombs were you born, O you stupid
 one,
 And suffered with these births, old age and
 misfortune,
 Never did you care to know the Lord.

150 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

O you fool, just think, did you anywhere find peace
And repose without Sri Rama?

(ii)

Your Home is amid an ocean of bliss,
Wherefore then without knowing it are you dying
of thirst?
Taking a mirage to be real, imagining it to be bliss,
You have immersed yourself in it,
You drink and bathe there
Where there's no water ever, nor was nor will be in
time to come!
Your true experience and form you've forgotten,
O vile one, and come here,
You gave up your pure unblemished changeless wide
joy,
And like to some idle king who's deserted his
kingdom,
You have fallen into your dream-prison!

(iii)

You made the cord of your karma strong thereby,
And with your own hands tied the knot,
This is why you've fallen into subjection, O
unfortunate one,
Resulting in the affliction of dwelling in the womb
In time to come.
Ahead of you is a series of births with suffering
That is known to one who's lived in his mother's
womb alone,
With head below and feet above,
With no one for you to ask of your bewilderment!
You sleep surrounded by blood and filth,
Urine and dirt, worms and slime;

Tender is your flesh, but the anguish is deep,
You beat your head and weep!

(iv)

Wherever you were enmeshed by the net
Of your karma,
There the Lord was with you, He never left you,
In many ways did He protect and nourish you,
Most graciously did He give you wisdom and
discrimination
With which you recollected many of your previous
births, saying:
'I take refuge in that Lord whose is this *Maya* of
three *gunas*,
Which has overpowered the *jiva*,
And even without essence, it renews itself everyday,
Taking most novel forms,
May the Lord of Lakshmi rescue me speedily from
this Calamity
In which He has endowed me with intellect'.

(v)

Then, feeling most downcast in your heart in many
ways,
You said to yourself: 'Now being born in this world,
I'll sing praise of the Lord with the discus in His
hand'.
Thinking thus, you kept quiet, O sinner, and the
winds impelled you,
Impelled thus by the most fierce gales you suffered
many troubles
And the fire of this anguish burnt it all up,
All the knowledge, meditation, dispassion and
experience you'd gained!

152 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Most troubled by this great affliction,
 You couldn't speak for an instant,
 No one realized the excruciating pain you
 experienced,
 All were simply delighted at the childbirth and sang,
 Rejoicing.

(vi)

Boundless were the miseries you suffered as a child.
 Hunger, illness and many other troubles afflicted
 you heavily,
 Your mother didn't know the pain which caused
 The babe to cry,
 She tried many various ways that made your breast
 burn all the more.
 Who can tell all the evils you did
 All through your babyhood, your boyhood and
 youth?
 Who but you, O great rogue, can say
 What difference remained between you
 And a heartless monster?

(vii)

During your youth, you grew passionately attached
 to Young women,
 Then you got drunk with your youth, in great
 delusion
 Through which you violated the bounds of dharma.
 Forgetting then all your former sorrows, and
 affliction,
 And even though you knew now the body of
 affliction,
 Even understanding it all, your heart doesn't break,
 Once again you did the very things

That would hurl you back into the whirlpool.
 The cycle of births and deaths, as before!
 The body's end, ashes, worms or dung, for which
 You made all the world your enemy,
 Your lust for others' wives, others' wealth, your
 hostility towards others,
 Your attachment to the world grows everyday!

(viii)

In no time came age which you'd called not even in
 dreams,
 What's there to say of its qualities,
 See it made manifest in your own body!
 Manifest it is in the body decrepit with old age,
 With pangs of disease tormenting it:
 Shakes the head, fails the strength of limbs,
 Your speech couldn't please anyone,
 Despised you are even more than the watch-dog of
 the house,
 You got neither food nor drink,
 Yet even in such a miserable state,
 You haven't attained dispassion there,
 O, instead you let the waves of cravings swell!

(ix)

These are but some of the tales of one single life-
 time,
 Who can tell the saga of your many existences?
 Having dived into four types of existence all the
 time—
 Give it a thought in your mind even today—
 Think you now today! give up the evil accretions,
 Sing praise of Rama, the giver of comfort to His
 servants,

154 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

The ship of the ocean of existence, hard to cross,
 Praise the discus-bearing Lord, the leader of the
 gods,
 The ocean of mercy without reason, the gracious
 One,
 Who helps cross the boundless *Maya*,
 Lord of supreme liberation, of the universe itself,
 The Lord of Lakshmi, Lord of life, cause of all
 salvation.

(x)

Comforting and easy to obtain is the devotion to
 Rama,
 It dispels all the three fires, fear and affliction.
 It comes not without the company of saints,
 That company too is gained when the Lord melts
 with Compassion,
 When Rama, merciful to the wretched, melts,
 One finds the company of the blessed ones, the saints
 Through whose contact, sight and touch,
 The mass of sins is done away with,
 Through meeting whom pleasure and sorrow become
 equal,
 Many virtues like absence of pride increase,
 While intoxication, delusion, greed, depression,
 anger,
 All of them naturally take flight before right
 understanding.

(xi)

With the service of the blessed saints,
 The fears arising from the sense of duality fly away
 And the mind becomes immersed in the love
 Of the Lord's feet,

The soul gives up all the accretions arising from the body,

And once again, the love of its true form arises too.

That love makes him altogether different from

The world, a stranger,

Seeing oneself as ever content, joyful, calm, cool and

Ever controlled

He becomes as though disembodied altogether,

He is pure, without disease, poised in the essence,

He is truly beyond the effects of pleasure and of pain.

One whose state happens to become of this sort,

He becomes blessed and holy in the three worlds!

(xii)

Why should the Lord not come to his aid

Who treads this path with mind steady and controlled?

The road shown by the Veda and the saints

Brings joy to all those who follow it.

He's ever happy by the Lord's grace who gives up Hope for this world,

Even in dreams is there no joy in separateness,

Who can tell all the million such things that are there.

This world is not crossed over without brahmans and the gods,

Without the guru, the Lord and the saints.

Having known this, says Tulsidasa,

Sing the praise of Lakshmi's Lord,

The deliverer from terror.

How can enmity of others touch such a one?

The Lord is compassionate

Even though someone try ten million ways to harm him,

Yet he cannot bend one hair on a devotee's head.

The base one who conceives of the death of a holy man,

He himself dies that death, the vile brute!

Hearing the story of Prahlada, well-known in the Veda,

Who will not take the path of devotion to the Lord?

The Lord rescued the elephant and established Vibhishana,

He made Dhruva so immovable that he never wavers;

Even to this day does the great sage Durvasa go down in shame

When he recalls the curse he laid on Ambarisha;

What's there that Duryodhana didn't do to the Pandavas?

The fool burns in his own pride,

While by the blessed Lord's grace,

Good fortune, victory and fame followed the Pandavas.

Whoever digs a pit for another,

The wretch goes down into it himself!

One who works against saints has no comfort even in dreams,

For him even the gods' tree brings forth poison fruits!

Who has two heads that dare cross the bounds

Of the Lord's servants

O Tulsidasa, one who has the Lord's arm's protection,

Never does he fear anyone!

138

O Raghunayaka, O Lord, would you sometime lay
 Your lotus-hand
 Upon my head, the hands that gave refuge to those
 Afflicted servants of yours
 Who but once called your Name when in distress;
 The lotus-hands which broke Shiva's hard bow,
 And did away with King Janaka's doubts and
 misgivings;
 The lotus-hands which raised the boatman as though
 he were a brother,
 And embraced him with supreme love;
 The lotus-hands, O Compassionate One,
 Which performed the vulture's obsequies,
 And gave him your own supreme abode;
 The hands which slew Bāli for your servant's sake,
 And made Sugriva the lord of the tribe of the
 Vanaras;
 When Vibhishana in terror came to you for refuge,
 The lotus-hands which anointed him king over the
 demons;
 Hands which held bow and arrows, killed demons,
 Made the gods fearless;
 The cool comforting shade of His hands dispels all
 Sins, affliction and *Maya*,
 Tulsidasa longs day and night for the shade
 Of those very lotus-hands.

139

O you merciful to the wretched, look!
 This world is burning with sin, sorrows, poverty
 And the insufferable threefold fire!
 O God, this afflicted one calls at your door,
 For, all the joy of all has been ruined altogether!

It's the Lord's word, confirmed by the Veda and the enlightened ones:

'The brahmans, the gods here below, are my very image!'

But today their minds are all swallowed up
By passion and anger, intoxication, delusion, greed
and avarice,

While the ruling circles perpetrate millions of evils,
New and harsh strategems are devised by them all
the time.

O Lord, atheism has sought out and destroyed all
faith,

All morality and belief, violated Dharma's bounds
and devotion's;

The world today is shorn of the dharma of the four
orders and of the four estates,

Respect for rules of society and the Veda's injunctions
All gone;

The subjects of the State are all fallen, being sinful
and hypocritical,

Each and every one immersed in his own pleasures;
Peace, truthfulness and auspicious ways have
declined,

While sins, wrong ways and hypocrisy are growing.
Good men suffer, nobility itself grieves, while evil
men

Disport themselves and Sin itself rejoices!

Fruitless are both the means of personal and of
supreme good,

No spiritual endeavours through them succeed.

The earth that used to be a wishing-cow has fallen
to the butcher, Kali,

Helpless and fretful is she, seeds sown in her do not
grow any more.

How can the evil deeds of Kali be described—

He goes around doing nothing, making people idle;
To top it all, he grinds and gnashes his teeth
And wrings his hands
Who can say what further evils he intends.
O Lord, the more lenient you are through your
gracious ways,
The more the wretch raises up his head!
Show him your anger, wag your forefinger to
threaten him,
And he would wither away like the gourd's tender
fruit.
I give myself to you, look well and do justice,
Or else the earth becomes empty of joy and all that's
good!
So that people of fortune and devotion may say:
'Sri Rama has regarded us with His gracious glance!'
Having heard my petition, the Lord looked joyously,
smiling,
He has soaked the earth with His compassion's
shower.
When Rama's rule was established, the task was all
accomplished,
All the good signs appeared, for King Rama is the
world's conqueror,
The great and capable royal Lord saved the army of
good deeds
That was losing ground, and good men praised His
disposition,
Giving respect, for their torments have passed
effortlessly away.
For ever are you famed, Lord, for rehabilitating the
displaced,
For restoring the uprooted ones, and recovering
What is lost.
Says Tulsidasa, the destroyer of all afflictions,

To whom has He not given the shelter of His arms,
The arm that sets one free from all fear!

140

Unfortunate are the men who live in this world,
A form of hell,
Turned away from the feet of the Lord, the breaker
of the web of existence.
Night and day are they inclined to sin, impure, dark
and vile,
They have abandoned the way shown by the holy
books.
Neither do they associate with saints,
Nor sing the praise of the Lord,
Nor yet do they love to hear the story of Rama,
For all the time they slumber deeply in the night
That is attachment to son, wife, wealth and house,
Never does their consciouness awaken!
Says Tulsidasa, these fools, giving up the elixir of
the Lord's Name,
They obstinately ask for and drink the poison of
sense-objects,
They're like hogs, dogs, jackals born into this world
Just to bring affliction to their mothers.

141

O Ramchandra, O Raghunayaka, in what way shall I
entreat you?
When I look at my many sins,
And then reckon your Name 'the Sinless', I'm afraid.
I do not bring into my heart the ways of saints,
Who are filled with sorrow to see others suffer,
Joyful to see them happy;
But rather I rejoice in another's misfortune greatly,

And hearing of another's prosperity, I burn without fire!

I go around deceiving people in many ways,
Telling them of means like devotion, dispassion, and knowledge,

I fill my belly, leading straight to hell, selling
Your Name that is all to Shiva—the abode of bliss.

In my heart I know my sins to be like an ocean,
Yet if anyone tell me they're even a drop, I fight him,

While I make a mountain of even a dust-speck of others' faults,

And abuse them, treating mountains of their virtues
as mere dust!

Dressed night and day in many various guises,
I steal the wealth of others, by one means or another.
Not for a moment do I recall your lotus-feet
With a steadfast mind.

If you only think over my conduct, then must I die,
For millions of aeons boiling in a cauldron,
Yet, O Lord, if you'd regard Tulsidasa with a glance
of compassion,

Then I may cross over the ocean of existence as if
It were only a cow's hoof-print!

142

O Rama, O you storehouse of grace, I'm most
hesitant,

In what manner can I make you hear my prayer?
All that I do is counter to dharma, how then, O
Lord, can I please you?

I know, O my Lord, that everything, moving and
unmoving, is your own image,

Yet, obstinate as I am, I do not set my eyes on you,

But rather direct the moths of my eyes toward the
 flame of the lamp of woman!
 I understand and I explain to others that your story
 is the fulfilment of the ears,
 Yet with these very ears I ever listen to the faults of
 others,
 Fill my heart with it and burn with it all!
 With the tongue with which I might sing your praise,
 And be happy without making an effort,
 With the same mouth I keep repeating like some
 frog
 The scandals and ill-reports of others and waste
 My own life!
 Again and again do I teach others, saying:
 'Make pure your hearts that the Lord may dwell
 therein',
 Yet in my own heart, I've let a host of evil ones live,
 Pride, Intoxication and Delusion!
 For no reason do I waste the very body gaining
 which
 The devotees give themselves to the pursuit
 Of the Lord's realm;
 Though I have a pitcher of gold filled with elixir in
 my home,
 I leave it to go and dig a well in the sky!
 With care do I conceal the evils that I've done
 In thought, word and deed,
 Yet I make known some good deed that I've done
 some time
 Impelled by others or through envy!
 It's as though enmity towards brahmans were my
 lot,
 In foolish obstinacy do I provoke hostility with all!
 Yet, despite all this, I sit among the saints,
 And there recount my mind's creations!

Were I to invoke the holy books, Shesha and Sharada herself

To help tell all my faults, they couldn't make it in a hundred aeons!

How then can I, with one mouth, recount them?

If I consider my own deeds, can I ever hope to gain your refuge?

Yet Rama's gentle nature and his noble ways do I keep in mind.

Says Tulsidasa, I haven't the virtue, O Lord,

Wherewith even in dreams I can please you,

Yet knowing that by the Lord's grace and compassion,

The ocean of existence is like a cow's hoof-print,

I am content!

143

Listen, O Rama, O Raghuvara, the Lord of the senses,

My mind is all immersed in doing evil deeds,

Forgetting your lotus-feet, it wanders night and day,

All for nothing.

It accepts not the discipline of the Veda, nor fears anyone!

Many a time has it been crushed, like the sesame seeds

In the oil-press of karma, yet it forgets the anguish it suffered,

Not even in dreams does it make a round of the places

Where Madhava's story is related among the company of saints.

Given to greed, delusion, intoxication, lust and anger, It is in deep love with all these.

It burns with jealousy to hear the praise of others,

While it enjoys so much hearing their faults,

With its own sins, it peoples a city,
 Yet it cannot bear to hear of the little village of
 those of others!
 Your Name that is the fruit of all spiritual pursuits,
 The very essence of the Veda, a raft for the river of
 existence,
 This rogue is selling to others for a mere farthing,
 It goes about insisting on being their slave.
 Sometimes by the grace of the company of saints,
 I pass by close to the good path of devotion
 To the Lord,
 When evil desires, their anger aroused, push me
 down
 All at once, giving me a hard jolt!
 Already am I wretched and filthy, covered with sin,
 and stupid,
 Besieged awfully by the net of calamity.
 Wherefore, O you abode of compassion, it grows
 unbearable
 To take this insufferable onslaught of the mind,
 I've fallen defeated though I have tried many ways,
 That is why I've come to tell you without further
 delay,
 That Tulsidasa's fear will be dispelled
 Only when you come to dwell in my heart!

144

O Raghuvira, who's there whom you haven't
 protected For your Name's sake?
 For no reason are you compassionate, O Lord,
 You take away all the fears of existence.
 It's well-known both in the world and the Veda
 That Ajamil, a brahman by caste, was a home of
 sins,

Yet you warded off his dispatch to the terrible abode
of Yama

Through his remembering your Name as he recalled
his own son.

When the crocodile caught hold of the elephant,
That ocean of pride, that base, low beast,
Then being remembered just once, O Lord, you came
immediately

To take away the unbearable anguish of his heart.
The hunter, the Nishad, the vulture Jatayu, the
prostitute,

And many others, were roots of countless vices,
Yet O Rama,

Through your Name's shelter, you did away with
all their anguish.

In what deed then am I less than any of these, O
king, O you jewel of Raghu's line?

Yet Tulsidasa suffers night and day, down in this
terrible well of darkness!

145

Wherefore, O you ocean of grace, does this
wretched slave receive no help at your door?

While whenever and wherever an afflicted one call
upon you,

You burnt up his affliction there itself.

The elephant, Prahlada, the Pandavas and the
monkey,

You did away with their crises arising from the
enemy.

You rose to meet Vibhishana as though he were like
Bharata,

When in the agony of fear of his brother, he bowed
down to you.

As for me, having taken your Name, I'd populate a
 village in my heart,
 I'd bring good people one by one such as
 Hymn-singing, Discrimination and Renunciation, to
 settle there,
 But Lust and other cruel evil ones, having got wind
 of it,
 Filled with anger, they use their force against them,
 They evict the good people and keep instead, O
 Rama, O Lord of the senses,
 Woman, enemies and wealth in my city, O Lord of
 the senses,
 I'm all spent, trying many ways like peace and
 service,
 Deception, force and paying ransom to bring them
 down.
 In this great affliction through conflict for no reason,
 I've come out now and called upon the Lord,
 The gods are all selfish, without a master, cruel and
 incapable,
 There's no compassion in their hearts at all!
 Where then should I go? Who'll take away my
 misfortune?
 Who in all the world can carry me across this
 existence?
 But though Tulsi is so low, he is still yours,
 To none other does he belong.
 Give him but once the helping hand of your
 devotion,
 So that the settlement of your Name should flourish:.

146

In every way, O Rama, I want to become your servant,
 Yet I find that everywhere there's a mastership going
 on,

It's all the fanciful play of the age of Kali!
 Time, karma, the senses and their objects, all crowd
 round me to buy me up,
 And when I do not give in, they bind me, offering
 me a high price!
 You're named 'One who delivers captives', it has
 earned a great fame.
 And when I told them I wished to be *your* servant,
 They feigned love and asked for a dwelling-place
 within my heart.
 So long have I managed to escape with your Name
 for cover,
 But now has the age of Kali overpowered the world
 itself.
 Take care, then, to nourish and protect this poor
 servant,
 Or else, seeking him, you'll find him no longer!
 Like the effortless play by which you settled
 The dispute of the bird and the dog,
 Now, with the same effortless ease, say,
 O you compassionate One, 'Tulsi is mine!'

147

O you ocean of compassion, day and night do I
 remain downhearted,
 Only because, O great king, by laying bare one's
 thighs,
 A man brings shame on himself alone.
 Lust and other evil ones stay close to me,
 And wish to destroy me, these rogues,
 Nor can they live without me, by their deceptions,
 They burn my breast!
 Knowing them to be dwelling within my heart, and
 friendly,
 I have myself fulfilled every wish of theirs,

And yet these rogues, these doers of evil deeds,
They've turned me into the stick of the Kathak
dance!

Never have I seen or heard till this day such a close
bond:

All sorts of deeds they do, but their unwelcome
result falls upon my head!

Most unjust do they seem to be, but still they
wouldn't be discarded,

I'm all immersed in a dilemma, all at a loss,

O grasp my arm and take me out of it all,

I offer myself to you, look but once

To this curious play of your servant's heart,

And Tulsidasa's troubles will all melt away

Without an effort!

148

O Raghuvira, O Lord of the senses,

What mouth should I find with which to tell you,

I swear by my Master, that when I think

On all my deeds, I shrink into myself with shame.

With service, you are overcome, being remembered
become a friend,

And when one takes refuge, you appear yourself.

The very ocean of mercy, a friend of one in trouble,

A helper of the wretched,

A cherisher of those who humble themselves before
you,

I've heard and known your praises,

Yet I haven't served you, I haven't meditated on
them,

By none of these have I kept my love for your feet.

Having found a noble Master like Rama,

I have still ruined the chance to the full.

My Lord is the only one gracious to the poor,
 Yet did I not embrace poverty.
 Now O Lord, Says Tulsidasa, do whatever you can
 For him from your own side.

149

Where shall I go?—To whom shall I speak?—
 For I have no other refuge
 Your servant has wasted his life away, waiting at
 your door!
 If I've ruined it all, Lord, it's only owing to my dire
 affliction,
 But how should it become you, O you abode of
 mercy,
 If you too behave as I do?
 Each day an evil day, each day brings trouble to me,
 Each its sorrows and its vices!
 As long as you, O jewel of Raghu's line, look not
 towards me;
 If I've turned my back on you, it's only because I'm
 blind,
 But as for you, you have universal vision,
 Indeed you alone are like you,
 There's no other deliverer of the sorrows of the
 downhearted.
 Dependent and wretched am I, my God,
 But you are independent, O Lord of the senses!
 I offer myself to you! Can a mere reflection pray to
 the speaker?
 Look you to yourself—then look on me, take me to
 be your true servant.
 Great is the shield of Rama's Name, for whoever
 took it was saved.
 O Rama, your noble ways and deeds ever delight
 my heart,

Be gracious to me in whatever way you please,
For this Tulsidasa is verily your own!

150

O gracious Rama, I'm troubled for myself and yet
I'm not,

For, in this world all living beings alike are vessels
of affliction.

Is then my bond with such a great one only one-
sided?

For, there're many close to you, but for me there's
only you!

In my heart, I'm deeply downcast, it's a great shame,
O all-knowing Lord!

That I am evil and a poor servant,
Yet do I speak like a true servant.

Good or bad, all men and women call me Rama's,
And if the servant goes astray, as in case of a dog,
The abuses fall upon the master's head.

I'm at a loss how, by what means,
This dilemma is to be resolved.

O friend of the poor, please do for me whatever can
be done,

Look to your own songs of praise, am I not one
among them?

Even if the Lord has given me up,
Yet has Tulsidasa come to him for refuge.

151

O heart, if you hadn't been ashamed to be Rama's
servant,

Then you wouldn't have been

Sold from hand to hand for a good or a throw-
away price.

If your tongue hadn't grown lazy repeating the
Lord's Name,

Then, O vile one, you wouldn't have to eat the dust,
Like to the puppet-miser of some magician's.

If, O my mind, you'd listened to me and earned the
riches of the Name,

Then, being before Sita's Lord you'd be happy and
welcome everywhere.

Had Rama been truly dear to you

Then you had been dear to one and all,

Neither would time and karma, family and other
impellers be angered with you.

If you'd only given your heart to love of Rama's
Name,

Then all travellers along the road of worldly or
supreme good,

They'd all have believed and trusted you.

If you'd served the saints and been pained

to hear to learn of other people's pains,

Then would the mud and filth of ten million births
Have settled down at the bottom of your heart's
lake.

This road through existence that's most rough and
unending,

Without an effort would it have come to an end.

Such was the greatness even of the inverted Name

That it could make a sage out of a hunter!

O you fool, hadn't this body, difficult even

For the gods to gain, been wasted,

Then you'd have been the root of all that's good
and auspicious,

With the creator, Brahma himself, favourable to you,
and if, O my mind,

You'd been immersed in the love and faith in Rama's
Name,

You'd have done away with the threefold fire
altogether!

152

To whom has Rama not done good, from His own
goodness?

Through age on age has this great good praise
Of Janaki's Lord been celebrated in all the world.

When Brahma and other gods recounted

The Earth's anguish, and prayed,

Then Rama, the moon for the kumud-flowers of the
sun's line,

And the very elixir of bliss, came forth and was
born!

When Visvamitra melted like dew to see the
demoness Taraka's power,

And the Lord returned good for evil, and gave her
The fruit of His mercy in the form of anger;

He visited the Ashram himself, and took away the
stone Ahalya's affliction;

And moving on from there, truly rescued

Mithila's lord, Janaka,

From the despair he was sinking in.

He saw Parashurama, a mass of wrath, rich in pride
and egotism,

And by His glance, He transformed him

Into a vessel of peace and equanimity.

He proceeded with a joyful heart to the forest,

Obeying His father's and His mother's command:

Who else is such a steadfast yoke-bearer of dharma,

Full of fortitude, a conqueror, of gracious ways

And of virtues?

The poor, low-born Guha, what creatures had he
not eaten up?

Yet he was honoured by Him like a friend and a
 companion
 Through his pure and holy love.
 Who with respect gave salvation to Sabari, to the
 vulture Jatayu?
 Who took away Sugriva's troubles when he was
 At the end of his tether with misery,
 Who else could have shielded Vibhishana,
 Seized by death as he was,
 That even to this day he sits in majesty on Ravana's
 throne?
 That stupid inhabitant of Ayodhya without a speck
 of intelligence,
 That low one attained the supreme place
 Even sages find hard to reach.
 What creature hasn't achieved liberation by Rama's
 Name?
 So Shiva, Girija's beloved, remembers it, proclaiming
 it to the world.
 Who, hearing Ajamil's story, wouldn't be filled with
 joy?
 And who, in this Kali-age, does not attain
 The Lord's realm by the Name?
 The wonder of Rama's Name can turn an *Ak* plant
 into the wishing tree.
 The Veda and Puranas stand witness, and if that
 suffices not,
 Just you take a look at Tulsidasa!

153

On you alone may I depend for my liberation,
 I offer myself to you as sacrifice!
 To one without virtues, a vile and shameless pauper,
 There's no other Lord, no other resort.

174 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

In house to house are many great excellent masters,
 But they all have their own stakes in mind,
 I can find no place save at the court of Koshala's
 king.

The One who was the monkey's friend and
 Vibhishana's helper.

O you who break the afflictions of your worshippers,
 Bring joy to your servants,

Whose Name is for the refuge-seeker as a cage of
 adamant,

O you ocean of grace and mercy, make Tulsidasa
 your slave now,

Let me then be sold to you without price!

154

O God, who else is merciful to the wretched ones.

O you home of grace and nobility, the crest-jewel
 among the enlightened,

Dear to the refuge-seekers and cherisher of the
 humble?

Who else is so all-powerful, omniscient, the lord of
 all,

O you Swan upon the Manasa-lake of Shiva's love,

What master overcome by affection made friends

With bird, demon, monkey, the Bhil and the bear?

In your hands, Lord, is all the entire play of *Maya*,

All false,

The evils and virtues, the karma, the deaths of all
 beings.

Good or ill, this Tulsidasa is yours, all yours,

Look only for a moment towards him,

Make him by that glance perfectly blessed!

155

Rama's Name is my one faith, I will not put my faith elsewhere—

Such is my perverse mind!

It wasn't in my horoscope to read the six Darsanas
Nor still the Rig, the Yajur, the Sama and the Atharva Veda.

Hearing of vows, pilgrimages and austerities I shudder,

For who would waste his flesh or die practising them?

The meshes of religious acts in the age of Kali are hard,

Their fulfilment depends upon wealth too,

While Knowledge, renunciation, yoga and *japa* and austerities,

All are threatened today by greed, delusion, lust and anger.

Those who sing the mass of virtues of Rama,

They have always and in all ways been worthy in this world.

Those who sit under the wishing-tree of the Name,
What have they to fear of dark clouds or the sun's heat?

Who can tell who'll go down to the realm of death,

Who will be raised to the City of the gods,

And who to the supreme state of liberation from this existence?

Tulsidasa loves to live in this world as Rama's slave!

156

In this age of Kali, Rama's Name is a wishing-tree,
It does away with poverty, starvation, sorrows, sins and evils all,

176 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Both the dark clouds and the heat of the sun!
 Taking that Name, the adverse Creator's adverse
 mind turns favourable,
 The lord of the sages, Valmiki, tells the Name's glory
 in reverse,
 While the great god, Shiva, that of repeating it
 straight.
 He who has the power of the most beautiful Name
 with him,
 He has both this world and the one hereafter taken
 good care of.
 For Tulsidasa, owing to the Name, there's no sorrow
 or anxiety,
 Either in continuing to live in this world, or in quitting
 it!

157

Serve a good master like Rama,
 Giver of joys, of noble ways, bold, pure and beautiful
 As ten million gods of Love in one!
 Sharada, Shesha and saints, all sing his glories and
 greatness,
 Singers such as the Sama Veda tell of His many
 virtues.
 Shiva, with the moon for his forehead, remembering
 that Name, longs for His love.
 He felt no pain in going into exile in an alien land,
 He's one who feels bashful by just one salutation.
 Vibhishana is a well-known witness,
 Seated as he still is, firmly on Lanka's throne.
 Light is Rama's service, He keeps vigil in all four
 ages,
 In all four times everyday, protecting his servants.
 Seeing their faults, yet He isn't angered or annoyed,

But He's rather pleased to hear of all their good
 qualities together,
 Through whose worship even creeping creatures and
 dark demons
 Came to be the crest-marks of all the three worlds.
 Says Tulsidasa, he who doesn't worship such a Lord,
 The creator Brahma must be adverse to him!

158

How should I blame the Lord?
 My mind, O Lord, gives up devotion and wanders,
 greedy after lust.
 Great is my pleasure in being the object of others'
 adoration,
 But little is my love of adoring you.
 I give instruction to others, but do not obey theirs,
 Such indeed is my folly.
 The sins which I committed with pleasure I hide
 within my heart,
 But if, inspired by the blessed one's company,
 I happen to do some good auspicious deed, I
 broadcast it,
 And entreat all the world to hear it!
 Whatever good acts I perform,
 I gather them like grains garnered in the field,
 But Hypocrisy, O home of mercy, enters forcibly
 Into my breast and snatches it;
 Greed makes my heart dance like some performing
 monkey,
 Fastened by the neck with the cord of hope for
 gain!
 While speaking, I talk like the wise, of the essence,
 of choicest dispassion,
 But to top it all, I call myself yours, O Lord,

It's as though I've made a drink of my shame, and
 gulped it all!
 Yet, O Raghuvara, be pleased with this itself,
 And give Tulsidasa his freedom from bondage!

159

O Lord, mine indeed is all the fault!
 You are an ocean of grace and nobility, O Lord,
 O Master, the support of this afflicted one without a
 master.
 My words and clothes show renunciation,
 While my mind is a storehouse of sins and evils,
 It is indeed hollow, being devoid of faith in and
 love for Rama,
 While it's solidly replete with acts of deception.
 Passionately in love with evil company,
 Contact with the saintly angers me,
 Just as the rabbit served the jackal to gain the lion's
 praise.
 Shiva teaches to have Rama's Name ever on the
 tongue,
 For, in this age of Kali, that Name spoken even for
 show,
 Dries up all grief and anxiety
 As the sage Agastya drank up the ocean's waters.
 The Name is the very root of joy and good fortune,
 It is by far the most propitious of all Names.
 Having heard of the power of Rama's Name,
 Tulsidasa is supremely content.

160

I've heard that the Lord is the redeemer of the
 fallen ones,
 I'm fallen, you the redeemer,

thus our roles fit perfectly!

The holy books stand witness that the hunter and
the harlot,

The elephant and the brahman Ajamil, and many
other base ones were rescued,

Indeed who can count those who were carried across
by you?

Whoever took that Name of yours, whether
knowingly or unwittingly,

For him both hell and heaven were shut off.

Tulsidasa has come to you for refuge,

Make him your own then!

161

Had there been any other lord like to you,

Then who would have been so mean, so petty,

As to pine away repeating his entreaties,

Suffering continuous affronts day and night?

The drink of the elixir of your grace that I beg from
you is truly pure,

It's as if my mind were a fledgling chataka-bird

Which yearns for the bliss of *Svati's* water;

If under the spell of time,

An evil thought or desire enters my mind,

It's as though a fish, dwelling content in water jumps
up and leaves it,

Then suddenly it dives back, being afraid :

How can anyone tell how much deception is hidden
in Tulsi's breast

Yet in your kingdom, O King Dasharatha's son,

Folks have harvested without sowing or ploughing!

162

Who in the world is magnanimous like Rama,
He melts for the wretched without their serving
him?

Indeed there's none other like Rama.

The liberation which even wise sages do not gain,
Practising yoga, renunciation and other disciplines,
That liberation did the Lord give to the vulture
Jatayu, And to Sabari,

And yet in his heart, he thought it not much.

The wealth that Ravana gained from Shiva by
offering His ten heads,

That very wealth the Lord gave to Vibhishana most
hesitantly!

Says Tulsidasa, O my mind, if you long for all joys
in all ways,

Sing the praise of Rama, that storehouse of
compassion,

He will fulfil all your desires!

163

O there's but one true giver, the crest-jewel of the
benevolent!

He who begged of him—out of his own need—

He doesn't again dance many a dance!

Gods, demons, men and sages, all are after their
own ends,

There's none among them who gives without
receiving.

But the Lord of Koshala, the compassionate one,
He is a wishing-tree,

He melts if once one bows his head before him!

In your other incarnations, O Lord,
You maintained the glory of the Veda,

For, although Sudama was your boyhood-friend,
 Only after you took a handful of flat rice from him
 did you give a treasure;
 The monkey, Sabari, Sugriva, Vibhishana—
 Which one of them did you not make free from
 begging?
 But now, the terrible demoness, Hope, does torment
 Tulsidasa.

164

Raghurai knows the ways of love:
 Brushing aside all other kinships, Rama knows only
 The bond of love.
 Maintaining his love, King Dasharatha gave up the
 ghost,
 Thus he established enduring fame;
 Yet even more than his feeling for such a father,
 Rama felt deep love and gratitude for the vulture
 Jatayu;
 Finding his friend Sugriva separated from his wife,
 He forgot his own wife, dear to him as life itself!
 And when his brother Lakshmana fell on the
 battlefield,
 He felt more anxious for Vibhishana than for him.
 At home, in his Guru Vashistha's house,
 In the homes of His dear ones,
 Or at his parents-in-law, wherever he received
 hospitality,
 There he remarked that he found nowhere
 The taste and sweetness of the fruits offered by
 Sabari!
 While sages sing of his true innate form,
 He keeps his head down, being bashful,
 But when the boatman called him friend,

And the monkey 'brother',
 He takes it happily and as a compliment.
 There's no lord like Rama, not in all the three worlds,
 In time past, present and to come
 Who is so touched by, so grateful for love!
 Who could say to Hanuman, 'I'm indebted to you',
 Who else would thus acknowledge others' service
 O Tulsidasa, even when one sees Rama's Love
 And His noble ways
 If devotion arises not in his heart,
 Then his poor stupid mother simply wasted her
 youth, In giving birth to him!

165

This, O Raghuvara, is your greatness :
 You disregard honour done to you by the wealthy,
 And bestow on the poor the fulness of your grace!
 The gods, weary with their spiritual endeavours,
 Yet had no sight of you, no, not even in dreams,
 But you took the crooked boatman, bear, monkey,
 demon, all
 With you, treating them all like your own brothers!
 As you wandered about the forest in your exile,
 Even though you met a host of sages during the
 time,
 Yet never did you mention this event,
 While you found pleasure in telling again and again
 Of the love of the vulture Jatayu and the demon
 Sabari!
 You banished the ascetic from your city,
 Mounted on your elephant,
 All on the complaint of the dog,
 While you let your subject the washerman live
 In your capital,

Even though he stupidly cavilled at your own wife.
 In this court of yours, the rule of respecting the
 poor Has ever been followed,
 Yet, O merciful, lord,
 None so far has reminded you of this wretched
 Tulsidasa!

166

Such is Rama, the benefactor of the wretched ones!
 O most tender storehouse of compassion, doing good
 To others for no reason!
 Ahalya, the sage's wife, bereft of all means and
 wretched,
 When she'd been turned into a stone owing to her
 sin,
 You went forth from your home, and touching her
 With your holy foot,
 You delivered her from her terrible accursed state;
 The *tamas*-bodied Nisada, given to violent ways,
 Who moved through the forest like some beast,
 When you met him, you embraced him with love,
 Giving no thought to his caste or family;
 Even though Jayanta, Indra's son, wronged you
 grievously,
 With a wrong too grievous to be mentioned,
 Yet when he looked all around the world for refuge,
 Grief-stricken,
 Then sought your refuge, his fear was dispelled;
 Born as a bird, living off flesh,
 What vows had the vulture Jatayu ever kept?
 Yet you accomplished his obsequies
 With your own hand.
 As though it were your own father,
 setting everything right for him,

Sabari, a mere low-caste stupid woman,
 She was an outcast from both the world and the
 Veda.
 Yet O you abode of compassion, knowing her love,
 You appeared before her, and thus saved her!
 When the monkey for refuge called upon you,
 You couldn't bear the terrible affliction of your
 servant,
 And killed Bali, suffering all his abuses;
 Vibhishana, your enemy's brother and a demon,
 What right did he have to pray to you?
 Yet you went half way to meet him, with arms
 outspread!
 The monkeys and bears were so full of evil,
 That it was inauspicious even to remember them,
 Yet the Veda is witness
 that you made them all pure and holy,
 Such, O Lord, is your greatness!
 How far shall I go on telling? Countless are the
 wretches You delivered from calamity,
 Yet, wherefore have you forgotten to grace Tulsidasa,
 Seized as he is by the sins of the age of Kali?

167

It is indeed hard to perform devotion to the Lord,
 It's simple to tell, but doing it is so difficult,
 He alone knows who has achieved it.
 To the one who is skilled in an art,
 It comes easily and is pleasurable,
 Like to the little safari fish that can swim
 Against the Ganga's current,
 While a great elephant is carried away by it!
 Just as one can't separate by force sugar mixed with
 grains of sand,

While a little tiny ant, adept in taste, can do so
without effort.

The yogi sleeps, taking the visible world
Inside his abdomen,
Giving up the sleep of delusion,
He alone has the supreme bliss at the Lord's feet
Who is separated absolutely from the sense of
duality:

There's no more sorrow or delusion, fear or joy,
Nor is there day or night, place or time there!
Says Tulsidasa, until this state is achieved,
Doubts and misgivings are not totally uprooted.

168

If only there had been love of Rama's feet in me,
Wherefore then should I have suffered night and
day

The three forms of agony and pure calamity?

If by night and day this mind had gained

The elixir of satisfaction sometime, even in dreams,
Why should it have run after sense-objects like a
deer,

Catching sight of them all in a mirage?

If, dwelling on the Lord's wonder within my heart,
And filled with emotion, I had hymned Him
Why then should I, like a dog, roamed from door to
door,

Baring my empty belly before every one?

The greedy who become Hope's slaves

Become lackeys of men too,

But those who, by faith in the Lord, conquer all
hope,

They are the true servants of the Lord.

As I haven't even one of the marks of true devotion,

So do I make this entreaty to you,—
 Have compassion on Tulsidasa, O Lord,
 For the sake of the bond of your Name!

169

If Rama had seemed sweet to me,
 Then the nine *rasas* and six flavours,
 They'd all have seemed tasteless and insipid!
 Having taken on various bodies, having felt, seen,
 heard
 That the objects of the senses are all deceivers,
 Even though I know it all in my heart,
 Yet even in my dreams,
 I haven't been satiated, I haven't tired of them.
 Through his one strength does Tulsidasa presume
 To say to the Lord,
 To whom has Rama, the mine of compassion, not
 given
 A letter of authority, for the sake of His Name's
 honour?

170

This my mind has never taken to you,
 Just as, by nature and without guile,
 It has ever remained
 In love with the object of the senses.
 As I have looked upon the wives of others,
 And listened, from house to house,
 To the gossip about sinful lives,
 I didn't look to the holy, or the songs of Rama's
 praise,
 Pure as the Ganga's wavelets, the river of the gods;
 And as my nostrils
 Have been subject to the essence of sweet scents,

My tongue addicted to the six flavours,
 Even so I didn't eagerly long for Rama's garland
 Given away as His gift,
 Nor for the remains of the meals offered to Him,
 And as this sinful body longs for the touch of sandal-
 paste,
 Of moon-faced maidens, jewels and garments,
 This sinner doesn't yearn to touch Rama's lotus-
 feet;
 As I've served with body, speech and heart
 All manner of false gods and wicked masters,
 I haven't served Rama who is ever grateful,
 Ever bashful, if but once one bows before Him.
 And as these restless feet,
 Have wandered, hungry with greed,
 Through the wide world, from door to door,
 Even so, the unhappy pair haven't once grown weary
 Visiting the resorts of Rama and Sita.
 Every limb of mine, O my Master, is set against you,
 Only this mouth has taken shelter in your Name!
 Tulsidasa has just this one faith,
 That the Lord's image is full of grace and compassion!

171

O cast me down into the torments of hell then,
 O Rama, the fool that I am, I've turned my back
 On such a pure and friendly Master as yourself!
 For those ten months in the womb did you care for
 me,
 Nurtured me in the guise of mother and father;
 To the stupid one, you gave the gift of discrimination,
 Good ways to a rogue and respect to a criminal!
 I try to deceive the Omniscient,
 To hide my sin from the all-pervading,

Yet O Raghupati, you haven't been adverse
 To such an evil-minded and poor servant!
 I fill my belly, calling myself your slave,
 But my heart I've sold to the objects of the senses,
 And yet, on such a deceiver as I, O gracious One,
 You've shown mercy without a touch of guile.
 Even knowing, understanding and hearing full well
 your kindness to me in each instant,
 My mind, harder than the *vajra*, has never been
 pierced With the love of Sita's beloved.
 When I weighed on the scales of my intelligence,
 The Master's benevolence to his servant in its
 entirety
 Against but a particle of my own opposition to Him,
 I saw that the weight tilted in my direction,
 Yet in spite of this, O Lord, you're doing, have done
 And yet will do all that is good for me.
 Says Tulsidasa, for my own part, I know He will
 fulfil
 And nourish this most ungrateful one!

172

Shall I live such a life some day?
 That by gracious Raghunath's mercy,
 I shall take on the saints' nature:
 Satisfied ever with what may come, never wishing
 Anything of anyone;
 Ever engaged in doing good to others,
 Shall I keep that rule in thought, word and deed?
 Hearing the most unbearably harsh words,
 I shall not burn with their fire,
 But all pride gone, a cool level mind,
 I shall count the virtues of others, not their vices;
 Giving up the anxieties that arise from the body,

Shall I ever bear pleasure and pain with equanimity,
And staying on this path, Lord, I shall gain
unwavering devotion to the Lord some day?

173

No other faith comes to me!
In this age of Kali, all endeavours are like the trees
Which produce only labours for their fruits!
Austerities, pilgrimages, fasting, almsgiving and
sacrifices,
Let them follow whichever they will,
But only on obtaining the fruits of their actions,
They'll know the reality,
The Veda serve the very dishes filled with these.
A man may perform *japa* or sacrifices according to
holy books,
But the real work remains still undone,
For the accomplishments of yoga do not bring
happiness
Nay, not even in dreams,
Even this pursuit is held up by disease and
separation.
Lust, anger, intoxication, greed and infatuation
They have all joined together
And have as though run away with knowledge,
With dispassion.
Renouncing the world, the mind is ruined, broken,
Like to the unburnt earthen pot dissolving
As soon as water is poured in.
Having heard disputes here and there among them,
My guru told me: "To hymn Rama seems best to
me, Like following a kingsway!"
O Tulsidasa, without faith and love, if a man wants
To die time and time again, let him do so,

But Rama's Name is a ship for the ocean of existence,
He who wishes to cross in it—let him!

174

Abandon him to whom Rama and Sita are not dear
Even though he be most loving,
As though he were ten million enemies in one.
Prahlada left his father, Vibhishana his brother,
Bharata his mother,
Bali left his teacher, the women of Braja their
husbands—
And all proved most joyous and auspicious!
All those are your friends and worthy of your service
Who are owned through the love and bond of Rama:
What use is the collyrium if it ruins the eyes?
What more can I say?
O Tulsidasa, that man is in all ways most truly a
friend
Through whom one has love for the feet of Rama,
Such is my well-considered view.

175

One who is without love for Rama,
That man is like a donkey, a dog, or swine,
In vain does he live in this world!
Lust, anger, intoxication, greed,
Sleep, fear, hunger and thirst,
These are common to all creatures,
But gods and saints praise the human body
On account of its love for Sita's beloved.
Be he valiant, wise, a good son with good features,
Reckoned superior for the weight of his virtues,
Yet without devotion to the Lord,
He's like the Indrayana fruit,

which, despite its looks, doesn't give up being bitter.
 Fame and family, good deeds, desirable riches,
 Noble ways, comely form and good nature,
 All, says Tulsidasa, are like spinach cooked without
 salt,
 If they are without love for the Lord!

176

O vile one, you've made neither love nor kept the
 bond
 With such an excellent Master as Rama,
 Yet, even after you've shown such neglect,
 He hasn't abandoned you!
 You made new attachments and bonds of love;
 But all of them are insipid, all empty of essence,
 They burn up your body and threaten your life.
 Everyone wants that all should be well with him
 And his own,
 But the basis for both these is Sita's gracious
 bridegroom,
 The One who is the life of the living creature, dear
 as life, joy of joys,
 And that Rama you have forgotten!
 He has worked for the good of vile ones like you,
 He'll continue to do so too.
 Wherefore then did you play tricks
 On such a noble Master?
 O Tulsidasa, realize even today where lies your own
 good,
 For, even a coward returning to battle turns a hero!

177

Even though you desert me, Rama,
 Will I not desert you!

192 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

For if I left your feet, whom else should I love?
 There's no other such excellent master and comforter
 In this world, within reach of ear, eye or mind!
 I am only a stupid *jiva*, you're the Lord, O Raghurai,
 You're the Lord of *Maya*, and I *Maya*'s subject.
 Though I'm but a wretched beggar,
 You, Lord, are a great almsgiver,
 I'm a bad son, and you're my father and mother,
 my benefactor.
 Had there been anyone else anywhere who asked
 after me,
 Then would Tulsidasa have sold himself to him,
 Even without a price!

178

Though you become indifferent to me, O Rama,
 Yet my hope is in you!
 The afflicted and the selfish ones all speak like mad.
 What wealth is it that the life-giving clouds need?
 And yet it's the rain-bird that is praised,
 For maintaining its vow of love.
 The pure nourishing waters gain not a jot from the
 fish,
 But where can the fish save its life without water?
 The little ones have ever been saved—I offer myself
 to you—
 By the shelter of the great ones.
 The bad coin is accepted here and there
 Only in the company of the good ones.
 In your court, O Lord, there's weal both for
 supporter
 And for adversary,
 As for me, O Rama, faith in your Name is auspicious,
 But, O Lord, it'd be harmful to declare it,

It's best kept within the heart, Lord.
 For the Home of grace knows
 What is in Tulsidasa's mind.

179

Where shall I go? Whom shall I tell?
 Who will listen to this wretched one?
 In all the three worlds, you're the only way
 For those who have no means at all.
 Though in this world, in house after house,
 There are many masters and many lords,
 But for the support of those without support,
 There is the host of your virtues alone.
 Who was it that hastened to rescue the elephant-
 king,
 Even leaving behind his mount of the lord of birds?
 What mother has borne such a son as you,
 Nourished such a storehouse of sins as I?
 You who performed the funeral rites of the vulture,
 Made so precious such a cowardly son as I,
 Worth not more than a cowie?
 I swear on it, Tulsidasa would be redeemed by you
 And you alone,
 Only, if the Lord delays it,
 It will beget only sins and woes!

180

O look but once upon me—as I'm your offering—
 Make me your own!
 O King Dasharatha's son, you who restore the
 uprooted!
 There's no other master so powerful
 Nor protector of the refuge-seeker,
 Taking your Name even a barren tract grows fruitful,

Engraved are your words and deeds upon my mind.
I've seen, heard and known men in the world who
are great,

Who among them restored and gave honour to
Stone?

Who could in mere sport bring down a Rishi such as
Parashurama?

Who is so good to mother and father and brother?

Who helped maintain both the world and the Veda?

Whose word is unshakeable?

Who fulfils the lowly and the ignoble?

Who'd perform the obsequies of the vulture and
Sabari?

Who is the support of those without support?

Who is so gracious to the wretched one?

Who is the friend of monkey, boatman, bear or
demon?

All the poor and ignoble base ones you've fulfilled,
O great king, you established them all

Among the company of the blessed ones.

This is indeed a true account of your fame,

No exaggeration at all,

Yet O you ocean of nobility,

Wherefore is Tulsidasa's turn so long delayed?

181

O ocean of compassion, look towards me however
In whatever way you will!

For, no other place do I have, yours alone is my
good support.

My mind is grown harder than a thousand rocks,
Who else shall I ask then but one who's liberated
the Stone?

I too wish to perform a sacrifice of love at your feet,

Like the sage Visvamitra.

I'm sore frightened to see Kali's filth and evil ones.

Like Sugriva, I am terrified by the terrors of karma,
As though it were the mighty Vanara-chief, Bali!

O you Lord of those without a lord,

I long to make a dwelling in the shelter of your
arms,

I'm being struck down by this great delusion,

Like to Vibhishana being struck down by Ravana!

Save me, O lord of Tulsidasa, save me!

I'm all scorched by the three fires!

182

O Lord, hearing the saga of your virtues,

A keen desire arises in my mind,

But O Rama, I know neither the way of devotion,

Nor have the feeling

That would win you over,

I have nothing to commend me,

Neither karma nor nature, nor a master, nor a place,

Nor indeed is the time propitious,

I have neither wealth enough nor a beauteous body,

Nor a right mind, nor yet a long life!

He whom I ask for water, tells me to serve him
elixir!

Whom may I ask then?—I haven't the heart to speak
to anyone.

O my father—as I offer myself—do something for
me, please!

For, by your glance, even in defeat comes a winning
stake,

If you show it, the invisible becomes visible,

By your explaining, the inexplicable is explained!

If dependence on your Name be water,

Then this wretched one is a lordly fish,
 May my tongue be burnt up if I speak a false word
 to the Lord,
 In every way am I lost,
 There being only one right remedy,
 That Tulsidasa lets the good Lord know it!

183

O Rama, you know well the ways of love,
 You do away with the greatness of the great, the
 smallness of the small—
 Such is the body of praise that the Veda claims for
 you, I offer myself!
 You performed the vulture's last rites,
 You ate the fruits offered by the Bhil woman,
 These facts have been well recounted
 Among the company of saints,
 Whoever has been honoured by you, him do the
 people And the Veda honour,
 So that it's reckoned weightier then either yoga or
 knowledge.
 Even in this hard age of Kali,
 Having understood the Lord's greatness of
 compassion,
 I bring it into my heart, I welcome it.
 O the wretched ones' friend, through having become
 Subject to others,
 Tulsidasa's love has lost its savour,
 Yet he lies stubbornly at your door!

184

By the repetition of Rama's Name,
 The burning of the heart is banished,

In this age of Kali, all other means are grown as futile

As though one'd employ a painting of the sun
To dispel darkness!

There're many good deeds to do, but they're all
made One with sins and woes!

Like to a tree which bears lovely flowers but is
without fruit.

Hypocrisy, envy and greed together have destroyed
all worship,

And the very means to liberation have become
The means to fill one's belly!

In yoga, no *Samadhi* is there, nor is knowledge or
renunciation without hurdles,

All have grown into mere words and guises,
While true action is nowhere found!

Only a host of evil ways and deception,

With both speech and conduct false,

All men praise their own ways!

What's the teaching that Shiva gives to the dying
On the banks of the Ganga in Kasi, the place of
dharma?

He tells them of the glory of Rama's Name,
And repeats it himself.

The world has known it from age to age,

The Veda describes it too

In Rama's Name alone be your understanding,

In Rama's Name your devotion too,

Let the Name alone be your salvation, dispelling all
miseries!

O Tulsidasa, put both your trust and love in Rama's
Name,

And Rama will come down to you

Some time in His own graciousness.

185

O Lord, I am not even ashamed to call myself your slave!

For, I've forgotten without compunction, the conduct,
O Lord, that pleases you.

He whom the sages hymn, giving up all attachments,
For whom they pursue the discipline of *japa*, sacrifices,
and austerities,

By what efforts can such a stupid wretched sinner
Like me attain Him?

The Lord is pure whereas my heart is steeped in filth,

This indeed is my dilemma,

Why should a swan frequent the lake where there
are Only crows, vultures, cranes and swine?

Where the wise go for refuge and quench the terrible
threefold fire,

Should I even go there, my intoxication, greed,
My delusion will only grow,

For the jealousy of a co-wife isn't dispelled even in
heaven!

I say and explain to others :

The saint is like a boat to cross the river of existence,
But I've made myself their greatest enemy

While I wish well from you,

Since there's no other place for me, stubbornly

Do I make my bond with you,

O you crest-jewel of the generous, give him shelter,
For Tulsidasa sings your virtues.

186

Through what efforts can I beseech you, Lord?
When I consider my own conduct, I lose heart
And grow afraid.

I obstinately avoid the means, O Lord,
 Whereby you know your servants,
 And melt in compassion for them,
 I pursue the very path
 That leads to calamity
 And the afflictions by day and night that I suffer.
 I know that I may be saved by doing good to others,
 In thought, word and deed,
 Yet, on the contrary, seeing the joy of others,
 I burn without cause;
 By all the Veda and Puranas, one should firmly attach
 Oneself to the community of saints,
 Yet being subject to pride, delusion, jealousy,
 I pay them no respect.
 Ever are all those things dear to me through which
 I would fall into the ocean of existence.
 Tell me then, O Lord, by what power can I dispel
 The sorrows of rebirth?
 I shall be delivered only when you some time melt
 For me out of your own gracious nature.
 Indeed Tulsidasa has no other faith,
 So why consume oneself
 Trying other ways?

187

This is why I've come early to you for refuge:
 For, not even in dreams do I have any means
 Like knowledge, dispassion, devotion!
 Night and day am I besieged by enemies such as
 greed, By infatuation, pride, lust and anger;
 Having met with them, my mind is all intent
 On the wrong path,
 Only if you turn me around will it go aright.
 The sense-objects are a house of evil

And bring only sorrows,
 As the saints and the Veda call out and proclaim;
 If, knowing this, I'm so much in love with them,
 Is it because of your impulsion, Lord?
 You can turn poison into elixir and fire into frost,
 You can save a soul without a boat,
 No matter how I look for one, I cannot find a Lord
 As gracious as you,
 Nor a benefactor as great as you.
 Knowing this in my heart do I leave all else,
 And remain dependent on you, O Lord of Raghu!
 Says Tulsidasa, this snare of calamities can be
 removed By your action alone!

188

I have known you now, O Existence!
 Through the Lord's power, you cannot bind me,
 Though you are an open house of deceptions,
 Only fair to look on.
 Looking within the banana tree
 You can never find the core.
 For you have I wandered through many births,
 Yet have I not been able to cross over you:
 Time and time again have I been drowned in the
 river of mirage-waters of the great delusion!
 Listen, O evil one, though you play a million tricks
 Yet you wouldn't catch
 A noble devotee to have him in your power.
 Go now, therefore, and dwell, with all your forces,
 In the heart where dwells not Krishna, Nanda's son!
 Go on and try your tricks on him
 Who doesn't know your heart,
 Let him die for fear of the snake of rope,
 He who doesn't know reality.

Hear, O Wretch, what's in your own interest,
 Be not obstinate,
 If you care for the welfare of all your brood—
 Says Tulsidasa, leave alone the Lord's slaves
 And flee where lust and pride live!

189

Go onward saying 'Rama', go on saying 'Rama'!
 O my brother, go onward saying 'Rama'!
 Else you'll fall into the forced labour of rebirth
 That is so hard to break away from!
 Old are the bamboos, the frame is all absurd,
 The crooked 'Karamchand' of past deeds has given us
 This rotten three-cornered cot, this body for a litter gratis,
 The carriers are all askew, uneven, being drunken
 With lust's intoxication,
 They cannot keep their feet steady
 On the path as they move,
 Sometimes over bumps and sometimes into potholes
 As they move,
 From the jolts we get only bangs and aches.
 The road is filled with thorns and brambles
 One gets caught in them,
 And as we go farther on,
 Home grows more and more distant!
 There's no one to help find it, either.
 The road impassable indeed, no provisions with us,
 none,
 Even the name of the village, our destination, is forgotten!
 Says Tulsidasa, O Rama, do us the favour
 To take away the terror of this journey of Existence
 now.

190

With Rama, the natural lover, you made not
 spontaneous love,
 So have you become a vessel of rebirth!
 Listen to this teaching even today:
 Just as you see your face in a mirror,
 But in truth the face isn't there at all,
 Just so this mother and father, this son and wife,
 Though you serve them as your own, aren't yours;
 Like they put flowers with sesame seeds for scent
 And throw away the cake after extracting oil from
 the seeds,
 Even so is the face of the earth covered with selfish
 folk,
 Whose minds are black, bodies white;
 You've made, are making and will yet make
 Friends and well-wishers unnumbered,
 But never is anyone like Raghuvira,
 The purveyor of true love,
 The One from whom all bonds spring,
 You haven't recognised Him yet.
 That's why you haven't caught on at all yet
 What's true gain and what loss.
 Who among those who've taken truth to be false,
 And falsehood truth
 Hasn't gone on to ruin his weal, isn't doing so,
 Will not do so yet?
 The Veda said, the enlightened ones say
 And I myself proclaim now,
 Tulsidasa's Lord is the true weal,
 Look thou at thyself with thy heart's eyes!

191

There is only one true lover, the ruler of Koshala,
 No other is so compassionate as Rama,

Nor so beholden by love.
 The companions of the flesh are all selfish,
 The gods, clever in their dealings.
 Who is so good as Raghuvara to the afflicted
 The lowly, and the orphan?
 Merciless is sound, fire uniform in conduct,
 Water is no warrior in love;
 The moon is diseased, the sun is too great,
 The cloud too cruel for love's way:
 And when one's mind gets attached to someone,
 Then he alone is for him the giver of comfort.
 But there's no master so noble, so straight like Sita's
 Lord.
 Who else on mere report of service accepts it?
 And who else seeing His servants' sins overlooks
 them?
 In whose court are the wretched given daily love
 and respect?
 Who else is the redeemer of the fallen ones?
 As He who loved the vulture and Sabari
 As his father and his mother?
 Who made the monkey Hanuman His friend?
 And welcomed the boatman like His brother Bharata?
 Who gives fortune to the one without it?
 Who takes the frightened ones under His shelter?
 Whose saga of fame is known in the Veda?
 Whose songs are sung by the poets and the wise
 men?
 However great a sinner he might have been,
 Whoever took His Name's refuge was accepted by
 Him,
 Just as a coin is put in the purse,
 And thereafter taken out no more to examine it.
 Hearing of His deeds, the listener's mind

Being filled with Kali's sins, is all muddied!
 Even this Tulsidasa, He made him His own,
 Raghuvara, the One gracious to the poor!

192

If you have neither bond nor love for Janaki's Lord,
 You wretch!

Where then are personal and supreme gains for you?
 The crooked Kali has fooled you betwixt the two!

Caste-dharma and dharma of the four estates remain
 Only in old books, in the Puranas alone;

Without deeds you're as mere clothing,

Like flesh without breath of life,

All the means taught by the Veda are heard to
 bestow The four fruits of life,

But knowing without Rama's love is like rivers

And lakes without water.

Many are the roads to liberation,

Many a means of many kinds,

But O Tulsidasa, I tell you, repeat thou Rama's Name,

Repeat it by night and by day!

193

If even today, you'd appreciate what are Rama's
 deeds, And yours,

Then would it be good for you!

Where do you stand, and where the Lord of Koshala?

And what does everyone call you?

O you, look at your face in a mirror, and think,

When has Rama been pleased with you,

When has He graced you?

And when has He been annoyed,

And showered abuses on you?

Think well in your heart and admit your defeat!

O remember, it doesn't take Him half a moment
To set right what has gone wrong through many
births!

For, whom has Rama not made a saint who has but
said:

'Save me, O storehouse of compassion!?

Who can give wisdom through instruction to one
Who hears the story of Valmiki, of the boatman,
Or of the honour given to the monkey, bear and
Bhil, And yet does not give himself to Rama?

What was Sugriva's service, and what were the ways
Of love Rama kept?

That He should slay his brother like a hunter
Who doesn't appreciate it?

What hymn did Vibhishana sing, and what reward
Did Raghuvira give him?

Indeed Rama, gracious to the poor, is most particular
To honour His arms' shelter.

Repeat then 'Rama', Rama'

Talk not about anything else,

For He is beautiful, a comfort-giving Master, wise
and capable,

Compassionate, ever the protector of the humble
ones.

Whoever has sung with tearful eyes, choking voice,
With joyous mind and trembling body of Rama's
host of virtues,

Hasn't his terror of existence passed away?

The Lord is all-knowing and grateful,

So give up your regret for what's bygone,

O Tulsidasa, your acquaintance with Rama

It isn't new at all

194

If there's no love for the lover Rama,
 Then what good is this human body?
 Gaining which the wise have given up all pleasures
 To become Rama's lover,
 While you, O unfortunate one, have sinned
 To your heart's content
 O you ocean of faults,
 Not few are the ways to happiness in this world:
 Knowledge, Yoga and *japa*, sacrifices and austerities;
 But vain and empty are they all without Rama's
 love,
 Like ripples on the waters in a mirage!
 Having learnt ways of society, heard the Veda and
 the Puranas,
 Having learnt from a wise teacher,
 Know the love and faith in Rama's lotus-feet as a
 mine Of all good and auspicious.
 Own up even today, admit defeat in your heart,
 And in an instant, it will all be well with you!
 Remember then with love your benefactor Rama,
 Take Tulsidasa's advice!

195

I offer myself to you, O Rama, master of the senses,
 Have compassion on me in your own way.
 The age of Kali in its wrath has done away
 With all good ways,
 All the means to the supreme good, heaven, personal
 gain,
 And the good that affords one joy,
 It has let loose upon the world its own hard evil
 ways,
 Wherever the mind sees its own good,

There do new afflictions grow every day in
profusion!

Pleasant wishes run off in fear and countless
unpleasant Ones spring up,

The mind sunk in anxiety,

The body agonized with malaise,

The tongue is filthy with lying, yet in spite of it all,

Tulsidasa has kept whole his bond of love with you,

The Lord!

196

Why do you wander, O my mind,

Making so many efforts?

Your suffering will not cease while you're turned
away

From the warrior of Raghu' line.

Even though you try ten million ways,

Yet the threefold burnings will not leave you.

As was proclaimed by the noble sage, Shuka, with
arms raised!

Forget your natural habits, consider well and see

That by churning water you cannot get ghee,

No, not without milk.

Understanding this, give up your delusion,

Adore His feet.

Easy of access through service,

His virtues are deep and dense.

Hear the one view expressed by all, the Veda, holy
books, sages,

Gods themselves and saints with steadfast minds.

Says Tulsidasa, without the Lord, this beast will die
of thirst

Even with the banks of the Ganga nearby!

197

There's no love in my heart for your feet,
 So do I suffer misery.
 Thus say the Veda, and all the sages with steadfast
 minds
 For, how should the deer in the moon's lap
 That has tasted
 Its elixir, be deluded by the mirage of the sun's
 rays?
 Hearing many Puranas doesn't take away one's
 ignorance,
 One reads but understands not, like a parrot.
 And like to the bird being caught without a snare
 While hoping for the silk-cotton flowers,
 Pecking at their hollow fruits,
 I know not the means, nor have the *Siddhis*,
 Nor the holy books' ways
 Nor yet *japa* nor austerities, nor have I controlled
 breath or mind;
 Tulsidasa has supreme faith in the Lord,
 That storehouse of compassion,
 For He will take away the horrible terrors of rebirth.

198

O my mind, you'll regret when this opportunity is
 lost!
 Having gained a body hard to attain,
 Hymn the Lord with heart, speech and deed.
 The thousand-armed one and the ten-headed, the
 kings,
 They did not escape mighty death:
 Saying 'I-I', they decked out their palaces
 And their wealth they amassed
 Yet in the end, they arose to go all empty-handed!

Knowing son and wife and other kin to be centred
 in the self,
 Do not give your love to them all,
 In the end, they'll abandon you, O fool,
 Why not then abandon them now?
 Love the Lord now, wake up, you stupid one!
 For, O Tulsidasa, the fire of lust isn't quenched
 With large helpings of the ghee of sense-objects!
 Give up the evil hopes within your heart—
 Abandon the false hopes that dwell therein!

199

O my foolish mind, wherefore do you run,
 wandering around?
 Giving up the elixir's essence at the Lord's feet,
 Why do you long for the waters of the sun's mirage?
 Through all forms of life have you wandered,
 Of birds, insects, men, gods, demons and all,
 Whatsoever there are in the world,
 You've had many houses, wives, sons, brothers,
 You've been born to many parents too,
 They've taught you things whereby
 You'll continue to go down to hosts of hells,
 They haven't told you the way which will cut
 through
 The bonds of rebirth and lead you to Freedom.
 Even today you strive for the objects of the senses,
 Though they've deceived you in so many ways.
 O vile one, how can you quench the fire of lust
 With the ghee of indulgence in the senses?
 Bereft of sense-objects you were miserable;
 Gaining them you met with great misfortune,
 So that you had no joy even in dreams.
 So have the holy books sung : both these sorts

Of riches produce sorrows,
 they're like the Jack-a-lantern!
 Every instant wears away your life, you've lost
 This hard-won body for nought!
 O Tulsidasa, give up worldly hopes and worship the
 Lord,
 For the serpent of Time eats up the world!

200

It's as if you'd obtained a body encased in copper!
 O wretch, do you not know
 That death is over your head?
 You've quite forgotten the Lord!
 Property, wealth, wife, house, friends and sons,
 Who in the world hasn't made these his own?
 But whose have they been?
 Has a man taken them with him?
 All such love are shadows of delusion.
 Those kings who conquered the world,
 Who bound Yama, the lord of death, himself and
 held Him in their power,
 Even of them did death make his breakfast,
 What then will he make of poor you?
 Look and consider, what's the true essence,
 What the holy books have sung,
 Still today, though you understand it all,
 You adore him not
 The one on whom Shiva himself has set his mind!

201

What gain was it being born into this human life
 When even in a dream you never served
 In the affairs of others, in speech, thought and deed?
 The joy which in heaven or hell, in house or forest,

Comes of its own accord, unbidden,
For that joy, O mind, you make so many efforts,
And even when it's explained to you,
Do you not realize?
O fool, you've done what your mind has cared to,
Moved by your attachment to others' wives,
By your enmity for others,
All under the spell of your delusion!
You've forgotten the many woes, the intense
suffering,
And the calamity of your sojourn in the womb!
For all who are born in this world,
Fear and sleep, food and copulation are the common
lot,
And taking on this body, difficult even for the gods
to gain,
You didn't worship the Lord, but wasted it in pride
And in haughtiness.
He whose sense of 'mine and thine' isn't done away
with,
Who hasn't with a pure mind become immersed in
Rama,
Says Tulsidasa, if for him this opportunity is missed,
What good will regrets hereafter bring?

202

What good have you accomplished since taking on
This human body?
Never even in error did you think of doing good to
others,
Which is the essence of the Veda's teaching.
This tree of existence has duality for its roots,
Fear for its thorns, and grief for its fruit;
It wouldn't be done away with, however you try.

You haven't yet cut it down with the sharp axe
 Of the hymns of Rama,
 His Name is a boat for the ocean of doubts,
 Yet you haven't carried your soul across,
 But through many births,
 Unwearying and without discrimination,
 You've wandered through many wombs,
 Seeing the natural wealth of others,
 Your mind was consumed by jealousy.
 You haven't cared to recall the Lord by cooling it
 With self-restraint, equanimity, mercy and help for
 the poor;
 You haven't remembered the Lord
 In thought, word and deed.
 Indeed you've forgotten Rama, your Lord,
 Your teacher, father and friend,
 Yet still, says Tulsidasa, there's this hope
 That He who saved the vulture will give you refuge
 too.

203

O my mind, worship the Lord's lotus-feet
 In your teacher, giving up all pride,
 By serving whom you may attain to the Lord,
 The home of joy.
 As the first day of the moon, so is love first,
 Without which meeting Rama is most remote even
 thought
 He's most near, dwelling in each heart, pervading
 all.
 As the second day, give up all thought of duality,
 And boldly go around on the face of the earth,
 For, Raghuvira dwells ever in the heart.
 As the third day, know that the supreme Purusha,

The Lord of Lakshmi, Mukunda, is beyond all the
 three *gunas*,
 That supreme bliss is hard to gain
 Without discarding nature's qualities;
 The fourth day is the giving up of these four:
 Reason, mind, consciousness and egoism,
 For in pure contemplation inheres innate joy.
 The fifth day is the throwing off of the dictates of
 the senses,
 One is not to be led away by touch, taste, sound,
 Scent and form
 Lest one is hurled down into the well of existence.
 As the sixth, defeat the six enemies
 For the sake of Janaki's Lord.
 For, without the water of His Grace,
 The fire of greed can't be quenched.
 As the seventh, give thought to the body
 Made up of seven constituents
 There's but one desirable fruit of this body—
 To serve others.
 As the eighth, remember Sri Rama is unchanging,
 Beyond eightfold nature :
 How can one attain Him
 While many desires dwell in the heart?
 As the ninth, recall that he who dwells in this 'city
 of nine doors'
 Wanders through many wombs, suffering
 Awful afflictions, unless he raises himself.
 In the tenth, remember that for him
 Who hasn't learnt to practise
 The control of all the ten faculties,
 All endeavours go in vain, he meets not the Lord,
 The One with the Sharang bow in His hand!
 As the eleventh, serve only one end

214 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

With mind controlled,
 For, by this vow one can break the cycle
 Of birth and death.
 As the twelfth, give alms and live fearless in the
 world,
 For, being immersed in serving others,
 Sorrows afflict one no longer.
 As the thirteenth, discard the three conditions
 And hymn the blessed One.
 Who is beyond the reach of mind, deed or word,
 All pervasive, immanent, eternal.
 As the fourteenth, see all the moving and the
 unmoving
 Things of the fourteen worlds as forms of the Lord,
 For until the sense of separateness goes,
 The Lord doesn't cut away the meshes
 Of the net of existence.
 As the day of the full moon, the devotee knows
 The bliss of love-devotion to be the Lord's bliss,
 Being level, cool, without pride, intent on knowledge,
 Indifferent to sense-objects,
 Make a Holi bonfire of the threefold afflictions,
 Thus celebrating the spring sports of Falgun—
 Should you desire supreme bliss, take this road.
 The Veda, Puranas and enlightened ones do agree
 That the Lord's songs are indeed the true songs of
 Holi.
 Meditate on this and cross over existence,
 Never again to fall into the current of Yama's host.
 The home of bliss, to quell all doubts and dispel
 woes,
 There is only the One Lord,
 But without the holy saints' grace,
 There's no meeting with Him,

Whatever means one might try,
 The feet of the saints, pure in mind, are a boat
 For the ocean of existence whereby, O Tulsidasa,
 One may meet Rama who takes away all woes.

204

Should my heart only take to Rama's feet
 As it takes, without an effort, to the body,
 Becomes immersed in it, in son, wife and property,
 In house and hearth and riches,
 Then it would indeed pass beyond all dualities,
 Beyond all honour, being all immersed in knowledge,
 Beyond all the objects of the senses,
 Which would grow unpleasant to it,
 Like the unripe mango made sour.
 If it dwells on the gracious Rama joyfully,
 Rama, the lord of Koshala, home of bliss,
 Why wouldn't He be conquered by you.
 Then would my heart give itself to the good of all
 In all sincerity, constant, unwavering and firm
 In its devotion and its love for the Lord
 But O Tulsidasa, all this will happen
 Only when the Lord melts in compassion
 The One who brought down the ten-headed Ravana.

205

Should you, O my heart, want to serve the Lord,
 The heavenly wishing-tree,
 Give yourself to the Essence then, His Name,
 Renouncing the evil brought on by the senses.
 Do even today what I tell you,
 Take on the following four firmly;
 Equanimity, content, thoughts pure and pristine,
 And the company of the saintly ones.

Take care to give up entirely
 Lust, anger and greed,
 Delusion, intoxication, love-and-hate.
 Listen to His saga, His Name on your lips.
 With the Lord in your heart, making Pranam,
 Bowing your head down to Him,
 Serve and follow Him faithfully,
 Gaze with your eyes upon the Lord,
 The ocean of grace,
 Ruler and King of all there is,
 Animate and inanimate, the lord of Sita.
 This alone is the Path of Devotion,
 This is Renunciation and Enlightenment too
 That is pleasing to the Lord.
 Observe this auspicious vow,
 Says Tulsidasa, such is the Way
 He who walks along this
 Knows no fear ever,
 No, not even in a dream

206

No one else is as worthy as Raghupati, for asking
 refuge,
 None wards off misfortunes like He does.
 Who else has an innate disposition by which
 He becomes subject to his servant's control?
 Who else without reason showers love
 On those who bow down to Him?
 He reckons His servant's smallest virtues as mount
 Sumeru;
 Seeing ten million vices in them, he forgets them all.
 Most merciful is He, the devotee's wishing-jewel,
 His is the holy fame of being the deliverer of the
 fallen ones.

Easily remembered, He comes running,
 Caring not for His yellow robes,
 The moment He hears of the distress of His devotee.
 The Puranas, the Nigamas and Agamas, all are
 witness,
 Draupadi and the elephant know it too.
 Worship Him, O Tulsidasa, whose praise the poets
 and the learned sing,
 Those who are without greed, pride, lust or
 infatuation,
 Adore Him, giving up all other hopes,
 The One who delivered the sage's wife, Ahalya!

207

No second is there like to the leader of Raghu's line,
 Worthy of worship, giver of comfort and protection,
 Mansion of joy, dispeller of sorrows, quietener of
 grief,
 Lakshmi's husband, whose virtues are unending;
 The afflicted ones, the low, ill-born, crooked,
 Vile and fallen and terrified ones,
 Those who cannot enter any other refuge,
 Remembering His Name but once,
 They're made to attain
 To the place where gods themselves cannot reach,
 Around whose lotus-feet the greedy sages are as
 bees;
 Those who've turned away from the world,
 Those whom even the supreme place attracts not!
 O Tulsidasa, O you fool, why do you not adore
 Him,
 The compassionate One, who is favourable
 To the orphaned.

208

What entreaty, O Lord, shall I make to you?
 Seeing my own unbounded vices and sins of various
 kinds,
 When I come to you seeking refuge, I hang my head,
 shrinking.
 I make the robes of devotion a choice screen,
 Covering it over with the green foliage of deception,
 I spread over it
 The gum of lovely words, and like the hunter, catch
 The birds of sense-objects!
 So crooked am I that on every hair of mine
 May ten million sinners be offered!
 And yet I reckon myself first among the holy ones!
 The worst barbarian am I, and a low one at that,
 Yet have I mounted the hill of pride:
 Though an ignoramus, I style myself
 As a jewel among devotees, a know-all!
 Whether true or false, I cannot say, but some say,
 O Rama, that I'm yours and I myself wish them to
 say so.
 Now, O God, to honour the saga of your fame,
 Make Tulsidasa truly your own,
 Do not put him off now!

209

No, my Lord, I have no other prop!
 This is my pledge, O you mine of compassion,
 True in speech, thought and deed,
 That I have only one way, O Rama, that of your
 shoes!
 I know my mind to be a veritable dwelling-place
 Of anger, pride, delusion and selfishness,
 So it's vain indeed to talk of knowledge or of
 wisdom;

Seeing in my heart many a lustful resolution and
 passion,
 No hope have I at all of *Nirvana*,
 Even though in my heart I long
 To go to the City of the Immortals,
 Yet without performing the acts shown by the Veda,
 It's most inaccessible!
 Difficult it is too to serve the *Siddhas*,
 Gods, men and demons,
 For they melt only by Hatha-yoga,
 By sacrifices, and Pranayama.
 Devotion is extremely hard to achieve,
 For Shiva, Shuka and other sages are like bees,
 Thirsty to drink the honey and the pollen of your
 lotus-feet.
 Hearing your Name 'the Redeemer of the fallen',
 I am relieved,
 But with the knots of pride in my consciousness,
 Though I understand, I still go astray.
 Seeing all this, O great king, I only deserve hell
 By my deeds, I deserve to lie in this terrible well of
 existence.
 Tulsidasa in his mind counts not even such terrors,
 Remembering Guha, the vulture, the elephant,
 Hanuman and their whole tribe.

210

Where else is there a place for me, O jewel
 Of Raghu's line?
 You're the fallen ones' redeemer, cherisher of
 The humble ones,
 The refuge of those without refuge!
 Where's one so celebrated as you?
 Though, O Rama, knowing my faults,
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220 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Being most wrathful,
 You do not give ear to my prayer, but turn away
 your face,
 Yet still shall I say without fear, O ocean of
 compassion,
 Hearing my words, how can you remain
 Without looking towards me?
 Chiefly I wish to dwell in your city, O Rama,
 But Lust and other evil ones have besieged that
 wish!
 Liberation is unattainable, and heaven only
 The fruit of good deeds;
 And now, through your Name's power,
 How can I settle near death's city?
 So then I have no place at all, O Koshala's lord,
 Where shall I go?
 Wretched am I and without substance,
 Restless without a resting-place
 Now then, be gracious to Tulsidasa,
 And give him a dwelling
 In the little settlement where live the elephant,
 The vulture, the hunter and others.

211

Would you ever, O jewel of Raghu's line,
 Let me have your compassion?
 The compassion that carried over such vile ones
 As the hunter, the brahman Ajamil, and the elephant,
 Recognising them as like to them, O Lord,
 Will you save me?
 Having been born into many wombs,
 Having done many kinds of evil deeds,
 Will it ever be that you take not to heart
 These low acts of mine?

O benefactor of the wretched ones, O Lord,
 Being unvanquished, all-knowing, capable,
 Protector of the humble,
 With your gentle heart, will you follow
 Your wonted virtues?
 Will you ever root out with all their kin
 The gang of rogues like Delusion, Intoxication,
 Lust and Pride?
 And do away with my insufferable woes?
 Will it ever be that you give
 Your pure and firm devotion
 Even more than yoga and *japa*, sacrifices and wisdom,
 And then fill me with supreme joy?
 If, knowing me in your heart as a crown jewel
 Among your idle servants,
 Lacking in means, with a crooked, false mind,
 If you should be afraid to save me,
 Then, O Lord, says Tulsidasa, how will you broadcast
 And spread your saga of renown, your great glories
 And your spotless praise, celebrated in the Veda?

212

O Raghupati, you are the dispeller of calamities!
 Most compassionate, protector of the humble,
 And the redeemer of the fallen,
 Cruel, crooked, low-born, wretched
 And most filthy barbarians,
 The moment they remembered your Name,
 O Rama, you sent them all to your own abode.
 Who can number wretches
 Like the elephant, Pingala and Ajamil?
 Yet to which one of them all did
 Janaki's Lord not give liberation?

213

There's none like the Lord, banishing calamities,
 No one so innately gracious and compassionate,
 The carrier across the ocean of insufferable sorrows!
 When the elephant felt his strength to be failing,
 He picked a lotus flower and took His refuge;
 Hearing the poor wretch's voice, He started off at
 once,
 The discus-bearing Lord, even leaving
 His mount Garuda!
 When Dushasana set about stripping
 Drupad's daughter before all,
 And she cried out, 'Alas, O Lord, save me!'
 He covered her at once with clothes of various
 colours!
 Knowing all this do gods, men, sages
 And the learned ones serve His feet,
 For, says Tulsidasa, whose fears has He not taken
 away
 The One Who delivered King Nriga?

214

How strange is the way of the Lord!
 In order to honour the saga of His praises,
 He leaves the holy ones,
 And gives His love to the lowly, vile ones!
 Putana went to kill Him,
 Painting her breasts with poison,
 But the gracious Lord of the Yadavas gave her
 liberation,
 As though she had been His mother!
 Such was His incomparable compassion
 For the milkmaids' love,

Intoxicated as they were with love of Him,
 That the Creator, Brahma himself, put the dust
 off their feet on his head;
 As was Sihsupala's wont, he counted forth
 Every day his spate of abuses at Him,
 And yet, the Lord in the midst of the royal assembly,
 Took him to Himself!
 The deluded huntsman took aim
 And struck Him on the heel,
 But the Lord, manifesting His true nature,
 Sent him up,
 Still in the flesh, to His own realm!
 What to speak of those who've done
 Both good deeds and ill,
 When He's taken into His refuge Tulsidasa,
 An open image of evil!

215

This is Sri Raghuvira's wont
 That knowing true love in His heart,
 He gives His love to the base:
 Nisada, the boatman, was a most wretched sinner,
 What was his place?
 Yet recognizing his love Rama took him into His
 arms,
 As though he were His own son!
 Could the vulture Jatayu ever be merciful,
 One whom the creator himself had steeped in
 violence,
 Yet Raghunath gave him water with His own hands,
 As though he were His father!
 The low-born Sabari, by nature filthy,
 She was a mine of all vices,
 Yet He ate the fruits offered by her with great
 pleasure,

224 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Praising and appreciating them again and again!
 Vibhishana was a demon and His enemy,
 But He knew he'd come for refuge to Him,
 He rose and met him like His brother, Bharata,
 Forgetful, with love, of His own body!
 How favoured or of noble ways were the monkeys?
 Even to remember the Vanaras was inauspicious,
 But He made friends with them all,
 Took them home to His city and gave them honour.
 Rama is by nature gentle, compassionate
 And so tender-hearted,
 Friend of the poor, He is forever giving.
 O Tulsidasa, indulge not in wicked deceptions,
 Adore such a Lord!

216

Leaving the Lord, who else is there to worship?
 None other has such affection for the humble:
 The demon Hiranyakasipu was Brahma's devotee
 In thought, word, and deed,
 Yet when he tormented his son Prahlada,
 Brahma did not spare him from being sent to death.
 The world knows Ravana as Shiva's devotee,
 Many a time had he offered his ten heads,
 Yet when he opposed Rama, Shiva didn't restrain
 him Even in his dreams
 What to say of other gods, they're all friendly
 Only for selfish reasons
 Never has any of them ever protected anyone
 Who has gone trembling in fear to them for shelter.
 Who doesn't give riches in return for services
 rendered,
 Such is the way of the world too,
 But, says Tulsidasa, there's only Rama,
 Who has love for the wretched!

217

If only there were any other, O Lord,
 Then, why should I time on time tell weeping
 My long tale of woes to you?
 Whose is the name 'Redeemer of the fallen ones?
 Who gave His abode to the brahman Ajamil,
 A mass of sins?
 There were others, Shiva, Brahma, Indra,
 And many other world-guardians,
 But none of them gave the elephant-king his support,
 When he was sinking in the river of grief.
 When, in the presence of many kings and rulers,
 Arjuna's wife Drapudi cried out, 'Save me, O Lord!'
 Though all were capable, none else gave her clothing.
 How can I, with my mouth, alone
 Sing the praise of song of the ocean of compassion?
 For, what did the Lord not do for His devotees?
 When He took on the human body as Rama?
 In case you, O Lord, despise me so much,
 Make me over to someone who is like you,
 For, wherefore and how else
 Should Tulsidasa ever go, leaving your feet?

218

O Lord, will you ever reveal to me those feet,
 Which bring peace to all the pangs produced
 By the age of Kali,
 Which are the means to all good fortune?
 Whose hue is that of red lotuses most lovely and
 tender
 Which blow in the season of autumn?
 Of incomparable beauty are they, caressed
 By Lakshmi's lovely hands!
 The feet which fathered the holy river Ganga,

226 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Dear to Shiva, the enemy of the Love-god;
 The feet which duped King Bali when as Vamana
 You disguised Yourself as a brahman boy;
 The feet which dispelled the sins and sorrows
 Of the hunter,
 Of King Nriga and of the sage's wife, Ahalya;
 The feet which are ever adored by hosts of gods
 And the *Siddhas* and the sages,
 They're comforting, a refuge for all;
 The feet by bringing which once into the heart,
 A devotee crosses over, and makes others cross over!
 O you gentle and wise Rama,
 O you ocean of compassion,
 You who do away with the afflictions of those
 Who humble themselves to you, seeking your refuge,
 Tulsidasa is about to die of thirst
 Yearning for the sight of those feet!

219

Ever since daybreak today have I stood at your
 door, O Lord!
 This beggar insists on no more than a crumb of food
 From your table, O Lord.
 A terrible famine is rampant through this age of
 Kali,
 All the ways and means are confounded!
 Your servant's mind is high, O Lord,
 But he himself is low,
 Just as though scabs and itches should appear
 On leprous sores!
 Going through shudders of terror in my heart,
 I asked the compassionate company of the holy saints,
 'Say, is there anyone to care for such as I?'
 And they answered me, saying, 'The King of
 Koshala!'

Who else can banish poverty and wretchedness,
 Save the ocean of compassion, Rama?
 You're the crown of all warriors, a generous giver,
 O you son of King Dasharatha!
 I'm a beggar, hungry from birth,
 O gracious to the poor,
 Fill Tulsidasa now with the pure grains
 And elixir of devotion.

220

O King of Koshala, take care of me!
 No other place do I have, no other way to liberation
 Save the support of your Name alone.
 I took care of myself, knowing myself
 To be my own benefactor,
 Having none else for me, no mother or father.
 I found, O Rama, your Name to be my teacher,
 My God, my friend and help!
 During Rama's reign, the shadows and deceptions
 Of the filthy-minded had no power at all,
 But this cowardly age of Kali, out of his anger at it,
 Now strikes those who like me are already corpses,
 Just as the jackal, having killed the frog, seeks
 hostility With the lion,
 So too, knowing me to be Rama's slave,
 Kali strikes me hard.
 Hearing of his crooked deeds, His unending
 iniquities, His evil designs
 Parikshita, dwelling happily in heaven,
 Regrets having spared him!
 O you ocean of compassion, look to the afflictions
 Of your servant's mind,
 I'm come for refuge, O God, O merciful to the poor,
 To have a sight of your feet,

228 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

You call him not to forbid it,—I offer myself to you—

Alas, you do not strike him down,

Let Hanuman see the wretch who's like a lion

Disguised as a cow:

When he looks with his red face, terrible brows,

His tawny eyes red with rage,

Remembering that he is the gallant son of wind,

The fickle Kali will lose all his force.

Hearing my prayer, the Lord smiled,

Telling his brother my words,

Lakshamana said, laughing, 'Well said!'

And with this, my work was accomplished.

When it was known that the Lord had done justice

To the poor,

Then words of congratulations broke forth

From the homes of the good folks,

Troubles and sorrows were all banished,

Gone were all Kali's tricks, deceptions and host of sins!

Seeing the Lord's love and affection for His servant,

Free from the three *gunas* of *Maya*, pure,

The host of sages, says Tulsidasa, exclaimed,

"Victory, hail to Vishnu!"

221

O Lord, day and night am I wretched,

Waiting for the coming of your compassion alone!

When it will come upon the wretched, O merciful,

I do not know.

Virtues, knowledge, dispassion, devotion

And all lofty pursuits,

Indeed the entire host of endeavours has grown confused,

Seeing Kali, they've all run away,
 While there remain in trust
 Only the masses of faults and sins!
 With such great misdeeds and iniquities,
 The earth has grown hotter than the sun,
 Where shall I go?—as I'm your offering—
 No place do I have, my mind is terrified!
 O my father, including this body,
 There's nothing I can call my own,
 I am in great distress!
 O you dark cloud, come down
 In a shower on Tulsidasa,
 For the goodly field of ripening grain
 It withers away!

222

I offer myself to you—whom else should I tell?
 Where else can I find a master
 Who is an ocean of virtues,
 Friend of His servant and abode of compassion?
 Wherever under the spell of greed and jealousy,
 I want in my mind anything for my own good,
 I return from there, like to the owl
 Which on seeing the sun,
 Wanders back to its shelter in the hollow of a tree.
 Hearing that time, karma and nature bring forth
 Strange fruits,
 I beat my head in sheer despair:
 They're all for me at all times but of one flavour,
 I burn with a terrible insufferable fire!
 It was only right that being orphaned,
 I'd be a vessel of sorrows,
 Since I hadn't yet become your servant,
 But now that I call myself yours, O protector of
 refuge-seekers,

230 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

I do not understand why I should suffer tortures.
 O great king, O lotus-eyed one,
 I'm all sunk in sins and woes.
 Tulsidasa, O Lord, will only be able to carry on
 In whatever manner and wherever
 Rama will support him.

223

Will you, O Rama, ever take me as your own?
 Friend of the poor, O you jewel among kings,
 Will you ever honour your celebrity?
 An ocean of noble ways, beautiful as you are,
 All-worthy, and capable, mine of virtues,
 You've protected, are protecting, and will protect all
 the humble
 Who seek your refuge, when will you recognise my
 love?
 The Veda and the Puranas say and the world knows
 too
 You to be gracious to the wretched, sustaining them
 everyday,
 But I must say—as I offer myself—that it seems
 As though you've forgotten your habit in my case!
 You're the friend of the afflicted, the wretched and
 the orphans,
 Is it then because you care for the ways of the world?
 Yet still will Tulsidasa end well,
 For you are the one who destroys
 The fears of refuge-seekers all!

224

O my mind, will you take to Raghuvara sometime?
 When will you abandon the wrong path,
 Wrong deeds, wrong thoughts, wrong desires,

And all your crooked deceitful acts?
 A victim of delusion, you regard poison as elixir,
 And elixir you reckon to be burning like fire!
 When will you abandon your perverse ways,
 When will you take to the love of the Lord's feet?
 When will you take the lovely letters, of the meaning
 of 'Rama'
 And steep them, like delicate modaka sweets, in the
 syrup of Rama's love?
 For, if you sing His praise and thus please the Master,
 You'll be given whatever you ask for!
 Then will you sleep on a bed of bliss,
 And the great burnings of your heart will go by
 Rama's grace,
 O Tulsidasa, the yoga of devotion to Rama will then
 awaken in your heart.

225

Faith in some other means will come into his heart
 Who either gains some other master like Rama
 somewhere,
 Or who has strength of his own to support him,
 Or who, being drunken with infatuation, lust and
 pride,
 Notices not this terrible age of Kali,
 Or who, being weary in all his limbs with all his
 efforts,
 Forgets the ways of his master, the friend of all.
 I know my own self only too well, I haven't heard
 Such praises as those of my Lord anywhere:
 The stone Ahalya, the Bhil, the bird Jatayu, the deer
 and the demon,
 Which one of them had done good deeds?
 As for me, Rama's Name is the wishing-tree,
 Through the grace of Rama, the compassionate One,

Joyful and carefree is Tulsidasa like a child in his
parents' kingdom!

226

Let him put his trust elsewhere who will,
As for me, the wishing-tree of Rama's Name has
borne fruits
For good, even in this age of Kali!
Karma, knowledge, worship—the doctrine of the
Veda,
They're still good in all ways,
Yet to me, like to one gone blind in the month of
Shravana,
All colours appear to be only green!
Like a dog did I keep on licking leaf-plates,
Yet never was my belly filled,
But now, as I remember the Name,
I see the essence of elixir set before me!
For both my personal and supreme goal,
It's no longer doubtful like saying, 'Asvatthama's
dead!'
'Do you mean the elephant or the man Asvatthama?'
It's told that the monkey-army built
A bridge of boulders over the ocean and crossed it:
Wherever a man places his faith and his love,
There his work is accomplished.
For me, these two letters are my father and mother,
And I, a little child insisting as children do,
May Shiva himself be my witness,
If I speak concealing anything,
May my tongue burn up and go down,
Tulsidasa has reached the understanding
That his good is attainable through Rama's Name.

227

Your Name alone, O Rama, is my benefactor.
 To my companions, for personal and supreme ends,
 I proclaim this aloud, with my arms upraised!
 My parents abandoned me at birth,
 And Brahma himself created me
 Odd and without karma,
 Yet some would say of me that I was Rama's own,
 Now, in what context would that have been?
 Without the Name, I wandered around,
 Craving for my stomach's sake,
 Even Sorrow looking on me grew sad.
 Now by the Name's grace, I get mango fruits
 From the babul and bahera trees!
 By hearing and meditating and through many an
 effort,
 While Tulsidasa's one support is in the Name,
 Like to a single knot in many loops!

228

For him who holds Rama's Name even dearer
 Than Rama himself,
 There is good even in this difficult age of Kali,
 In the beginning, middle and end of time.
 Knowing the Name's glory, Pride and Greed,
 Delusion, Anger and Lust,
 All do slink away, ashamed.
 On the good man immersed
 In the repetition of Rama's Name,
 Even the scorching heat of the sun casts a shade!
 If anyone says that by the power of the Name,
 A lotus flower blossoms forth from a stone, it's true!
 For, by remembering it, the Bhil woman,
 Sabari, came to be

234 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

A vessel of good fortune, blessed with deeds of merit.

Neither Valmiki nor Ajamil was equipped

With religious pursuits,

Yet such was the wonder of the Name, even inverted,

That those *gunja* seeds surpassed jewels!

The Name's power is greater even

Than that of Rama himself,

For it has made a village into a city!

By repeating it, even ill-fated ones

Like Tulsidasa have become right, at the beat of a drum!

229

May my tongue melt away if I say

I belong to any other master!

O Janaki's life, in birth after birth in this world,

I've lived off scraps of your food.

In all the three worlds, in all three times,

I can see no good friend who is your equal,

And if I conceal anything from you, then may I become

A mere worm, aeon on aeon, in some terrible hell:

What if my mind, having met this terrible age of Kali,

Which has made me a water-spider in a whirlpool,

Yet Tulsidasa is ever calm and cool by this strength

That he is at a great good place,

In the service of a great One!

230

Who else is a friend for no reason at all?

Who else is renowned as 'the poor's helper'?

So His servants gaze at His brow,

Waiting for His merciful glance!

Great and small, whomever the Creator has fashioned,
 All wish their personal ends to be served.
 To which other gracious Lord does it look seemly
 To nourish and protect the crooked Kol,
 The bears and monkeys?
 Whose else is a Name
 That, taken even in vexation or indolence,
 Does away with all evil and faults?
 Who else has gathered around Himself bad servants
 such as Tulsidasa,
 The fool who ever worked in opposition to his
 Master?

231

Who else is there for me, whom shall I tell?
 Who else may I tell my heart's desire to content
 myself,
 The desire that is like the pauper's to become a
 king?
 I have suffered and shall still suffer
 The torments of death, the insufferable
 Travails of being,
 Yet I wouldn't wish for the four fruits of life,—
 Which are for me hard to gain anyway,
 Though close at hand for you.
 I wish to remain yours, O Rama, a bird or beast
 For you to play with,
 Even a tree or a mere pebble for your plaything.
 By this bond I shall be happy even in heil, without it
 I shall burn with sorrow even in the highest heaven!
 In your slave's heart is just this longing
 That as soon as you speak the word,
 I'll grasp your shoes!
 Give me your word or bring the thought

236 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Into your heart,
It shall sustain Tulsidasa's Vow.

232

Where else shall I find another friend of the poor?
Who besides you would feel another's sorrow?
To whom shall I tell of my wretchedness?
Whichever way I let my thoughts turn,
I see lords without compassion, or if compassionate,
They are all unworthy.
Hearing and understanding this do I keep silent,
Wherefore should I speak
And lay bare my own weakness?
By my deeds, I'm fit to drown in a cow's hoof-
print,
Though in my words, it's as if I'd plumb
The ocean's depths.
Within myself, I'm most greedy, a slave to lust,
Yet still I call myself your servant!
Says Tulsidasa, you know all
That is in my mind, O Lord,
Yet still I wish to let you know something,
Please to do that whereby, giving up my deceit,
Lying at your door, I may sing your praise!

233

My heart's desire is of its own kind!
It longs to gain good deeds' fruits
Unattainable even for sages!
Though its wish for sins is not fulfilled yet;
Born in the age of Kali, in the island of Karma,
Living in the company of evil ones,
My mind is all drunken
With delusion, performing ten million evil deeds,

How then would I attain the peace of mind
 Of the supreme state?
 By serving saints and teachers, listening to the Veda
 And the Puranas
 I've known the truth just as the *raga* is known
 When the strings of the instrument are played upon.
 O Lord, says Tulsidasa, your disposition is
 Like the wishing-tree,
 Or like to the mirror for the beauty of a face!

234

In vain has this choice human life gone!
 The supreme end came not at all in my grasp,
 While with each passing day, my misconduct
 It has grown greater!
 Boyhood passed in play and eating,
 Youth was overcome by young women.
 The middle years have all passed away in vain,
 Crowded with ailments, bereavements,
 Sorrows and labour;
 Under the spell of passion, anger, jealousy and
 delusion,
 The company of saints I found not to my taste,
 Neither did I tell nor did I hear
 The songs of my Lord's host of virtues,
 Nor yet did the love for Rama's feet
 Spring up in my heart!
 Now does the heart burn in the fire of remorse
 As I hear of the insufferable terrors of this existence!
 Therefore, O Lord, do what you can for me,
 Remembering the ways of your great renown.

235

In this way has an array of births gone by,
 While I've given up a Lord like Raghunath,

238 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

The lord of life!
 Only to serve the feet of others:
 My mouth has gone dry, praising
 Such stupid creatures as are evil, perverse, timorous,
 All steeped in the filth of the age of Kali!
 I've reckoned them greater than the Lord Himself!
 For the sake of comfort, for pleasure, I've endlessly
 Tried ten million ways,
 Yet never did I get footsore, running for them;
 Always muddy like to the water lying on the
 wayside,
 Never did my heart grow still!
 Countless are the ways that came into my head
 To dispel this wretchedness of my heart,
 Yet, O Tulsidasa, the anxiety of my consciousness,
 It wouldn't go.
 Until I recognise the divine wishing-jewel!

236

If you know not Janaki's Lord,
 Then all karma and dharma bring only toil,
 That is what the wise ones say;
 Whatever the gods, *Siddhas*, lords among sages and
 knowers of yoga,
 The Veda and the Puranas have described,
 They all accept worship and in return give comforts,
 Measuring their own profit and loss!
 But whose Name is it that being remembered
 Even by mistake
 Drives away masses of sins?
 Into whose Person were Ajamil the brahman
 And the hunter,
 The elephant and the vulture Jatayu, and a host of
 others,

A million other sinners all absorbed?
 Whoever sets aside His servants' sins
 Equal to mount Meru?
 Who took into His heart
 His servants' virtues equal to a speck of dust?
 O Tulsidasa, O you fool, why do you not, even
 today,
 Abandon all hope and worship Him alone?

237

O my tongue, why do you not sing Rama?
 Why vainly do you repeat the evil stories of others?
 Thus you only make your attachment grow.
 Dwelling in such a pure and lovely temple as man's
 mouth,
 Do not put it to shame!
 Why do you give up the elixir dwelling beside the
 moon,
 And run after the mirage of the rays of the sun?
 Tales of lust are like the moonlight of the age of
 Kali,
 You listen to them with such pleasure;
 Throw them all aside, tell the sweet praise
 Of the Lord's fame,
 Remove the sin of the ears!
 Make a necklace with the gold of the intellect,
 And the choice jewels of Reason,
 Adorn with it that comforter of refuge-seekers,
 The Lord,
 The sun of the lotus of the sun's line, King Rama!
 Abandon your taste for disputations,
 Sing the songs of Rama and apply your mind
 To His most delectable deeds.

Then, O Tulsidasa, you would cross over Existence,
To achieve holy fame in all the three worlds!

238

If only this *jiva* comes to see
That all weal is from you, O Lord,
Why then should it
Like to the headless *kabandha*, go on fighting,
While it still has its head upon the body?
O Rama, seeing and hearing of my own faults,
My reason and my intelligence come to a standstill!
Who but the compassionate Lord can know
The living, the words and thoughts of Tulsidasa?

239

He whom the Lord has firmly taken as His own,
He alone is noble, holy, a knower of the Veda,
He alone is filled with virtues and wisdom!
Hearing of the birth and doings of Pandu's sons,
The right path was struck with fear,
But now they are adorable in the three worlds;
Hearing of their holy fame again and again,
People attain liberation
Never did King Nriga miss his dharma as instructed
by the Veda,
But turned without a fault into a chameleon,
He was drowning in a well
When you took him by the hand, and saved him;
The king, Parikshita, while still in the womb,
Struck by the weapon of Brahma,
That could destroy the entire universe itself,
He was not burned up by it!
The unaging, undying Namuchi, the demon,

Who couldn't be killed even by Indra's thunderbolt,
 Was dispatched with only a foam-flake!
 What was there in Ajamil or in Indra
 That had not gone all wrong,
 Yet you helped them greatly, dispelling
 Their heart's anguish.
 What sin in the world did the prostitute
 And the Love-god not commit,
 Yet did the Lord know their conduct to be holy,
 And gave them a place in His heart's mansion!
 What conduct does the Lord reckon good, then,
 I know not,
 So does Tulsidasa stand waiting for the coming
 Of His compassion.

240

With whomsoever you are pleased, O Lord,
 That one is truly pure and holy in his conduct:
 The prostitute, the vulture and the hunter were taken
 To the Lord's abode,
 But when did they burn in Kasi and in Prayaga?
 Nriga never swerved from the path laid down
 By the Nigamas,
 But the world knows how much he suffered.
 What initiation did the elephant go through?
 Yet when he remembered you, you rushed to him
 With your discus,
 Leaving your mount Garuda!
 Leaving the great families, gods, sages and
 brahmans,
 You came to live in a cowherd's home;
 You bypassed the Kaurava ruler, Duryodhana's
 wealth,
 And went to eat in Vidura's home!
 You are well pleased with your devotees,

242 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

And let Arjuna know something of your ways.
 O Tulsidasa, in Rama alone is innate spontaneous
 love,
 All other love is of the surface,
 Like the oiliness of water.

241

Then would you not deliver villains even like me,
 However a sinner took your Name.
 You welcomed him with honour
 As soon as you heard it.
 Death's minions knew Ajamil well,
 A mine of vices as he was.
 They threatened and tormented him sorely,
 But you set him free, and they were sent on their
 way,
 Wringing their hands, gnashing their teeth
 In helpless fury, empty-handed!
 The Lord knew only too well what they were all
 like,
 Gautam's wife, the elephant, the tree and the monkey,
 And yet, in their hour of need, He left
 The company of saints,
 That ocean of compassion, and rose to serve them!
 And today too, such ones have great honour
 At His gates,
 How many fallen ones have been made holy and
 pure!
 But many sinners as there are in the world,
 And will yet be,
 They can never tilt the balance against me!
 Up till now I've remained watching for your action,
 But you haven't deigned to take notice of me yet,

Now will Tulsidasa hang a puppet in your Name,
For I can no longer suffer such ignominy, such
ridicule!

242

There's no friend of the poor like you, Lord,
None so poor as I, Listen O King Raghurai!
No such crest-jewel of wicked ones
there is in the world,
And no dispeller of wickedness as you, Lord!
I'm immersed in sin, in thought, word and deed,
And you, O compassionate One, give liberation
To the fallen.
I'm masterless, O Lord, you the helper of those
Without a master,
Never does this thought leave my mind,—
I'm afflicted, you take affliction away—
This fame of yours the Veda and the Puranas sing.
I'm fear-stricken and you dispel all fears—
Why then have you forgotten your compassion?
You are a house of joy, Rama, breaker of weariness,
I'm most miserable, afflicted by the threefold
weariness.
Knowing all this within you, remembering
Your own lordship,
Give refuge now to Tulsidasa!

243

Knowing this have I set my mind at your feet,
That there isn't another friend like you
For no reason at all.
As the Veda and the Puranas have sung of you,
Wherever I've been born into this world,

244 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

There have been many fathers, mothers, sons,
 Wives and friends,
 But all their love has been for selfish ends.
 With deceit in their consciousness,
 Not one did teach me to sing the Lord's hymns!
 Gods, sages, men, demons, Nagas and Kinnars,
 To which one of these have I, taking a body,
 Not bowed down?
 Yet I've wandered burning with the three fevers,
 Overcome by sins,
 Not one, O lord, had compassion on me,
 Not one made me whole.
 Many efforts did I make for the sake of comfort,
 But turned away from the Lord, I have suffered
 ever.
 Now seeing the nets of calamity spread around me
 In the world,
 I'm tired out like a boat stranded without water
 around,
 Know, O Lord, that this indeed is my plight
 Only because I've forgotten my Lord'
 The home of comfort.
 Give up your anger now, O Lord, be compassionate,
 For, Tulsidasa has come to you for asylum!

244

Through this, O Lord, have I lost wisdom,
 That I gave up the Lord in my heart's lotus,
 And wandered, running all around, restless!
 Like to the stupid musk-deer who doesn't know
 The secret of the delectable musk in its own belly,
 But goes around looking for it in mountains,
 Among trees,
 Vines and creepers, on earth and in pits,

Wondering whence comes this superb scent;
 Or just as a lake filled with pure water,
 With water-weeds covering its surface,
 And wicked as I am, I burn my heart, ignoring it,
 Trying in this way to quench my thirst,
 The threefold fire spread terribly through my body,
 On top of which insufferable poverty afflicts me.
 I've left in my home the wishing-tree—your Name,
 My heart having taken a fancy
 To the garden of thornbushes of sense-objects.
 The Puranas tell there's no abode of wisdom like
 you,
 Nor is there a deluded one like myself!
 Knowing this within your heart, O Lord,
 Do for Tulsidasa
 What to your mind seems right!

245

My deluded mind has greatly deceived me!
 On its account, listen, O you compassionate One,
 Born time and again and yet again into this world,
 I've wept from sorrow!
 With the cool sweet elixir of inborn joy ever nearby,
 Under the spell of delusion, I've laboured
 In many ways in vain,
 Dull-witted as I am, as though I churned water.
 Knowing well in my heart that karma is like a mire,
 I have soaked my consciousness in it!
 Crooked as I am, I would wash away filth with
 filth!
 Thirsting, I've concealed from you
 Not a jot of my wrongs.
 The whole night has passed in making the bed,
 Never once, O Lord, have I soundly slept!

Great and small, good or ill, fat or lean,
 All, O Rama, manage to pull through their lives
 By your sustaining them.
 Hearing and understanding this truth, known
 In the world, and the Veda,
 The mind, under the spell of delusion, is restless,
 disturbed.
 It finds no place of repose anywhere.
 Had the world been on its own, independent,
 It would have remained ever in one state, constant,
 It wouldn't have suffered pangs of pain and
 pleasure,—
 Whatever one would wish for, that he would gain,
 No desire of any kind, of anyone,
 Would have remained unfulfilled.
 In the world, karma, time, nature, good and evil,
 the soul,
 All spring from your *Maya*, and so do all
 Watch your brow fearfully, in sheer dismay.
 Even gods, O Lord, lords of directions,
 Great yogis and sages all
 Let go whom you cause to let go,
 Grasp whom you cause to grasp,
 Its realm, like to a set of chessmen,
 The whole company is made of wood;
 You, O great king, created the game—in the
 beginning, It was not.
 Says Tulsidasa, O Lord, to win
 Or to lose is in the Lord's hands,
 So does Sharada declare with many tongues,
 In many a guise!

247

O my tongue, repeat Rama's Name,
 Know its essence, and with love, believe in it!
 Repeating Rama's Name, the burnings
 Of the heart will go :
 Living by Rama's Name, Rama's Name as your
 speech,
 It takes away the filth, the woes and calamities
 Of this perverse age of Kali,
 By the power of Rama's Name is Ganesha
 worshipped first,
 He's not hidden anything, but declared His deeds.
 A bridge for the ocean of existence, Shiva and his
 spouse
 Repeat it with respect in Kasi,
 As a means to the liberation of souls;
 Valmiki was a hunter, a storehouse of fathomless
 sins,
 But by repeating even 'Mara, Mara', came to be
 adored By the Immortals!
 By the Name's power did the pot-born
 Sage Agastya checked the Vindhya,
 And dried up the seas, which admitted defeat in
 fear, Turning salt,
 Boundless are the glories of the Name, Shesha and
 Shuka, Time and again,
 The enlightened ones and the Veda have described,
 The love of the Name is Tulsidasa's wishing-tree,
 His wish-granting cow,
 The Name of Rama is verily the sun
 To do away with the darkness of delusion.

Save me, save me, O Rama, save me, O Ramachandra,
O Ramabhadra!

Having heard your great good fame have I come
Seeking refuge!

O friend of the poor, O you who take away
All wretchedness

Poverty, afflictions, sins and sorrows terrible,
Insufferable faults and fears,

Whenever were people agonized by karma and time,
Caught up in the net of the world,

And rulers grew evil, turned into burdens
On the face of the earth,

Then did you take on the human body,
Drove away the earth's load,

And restored sages, gods, the holy ones,
Castes and the four estates,

The world and the Veda are all witness to it,
When Ravana left no one's honour,

Making all the Immortals

Prisoners at the doors of death,

You made the world-guardians free,

Restoring their abodes.

O Master of the worlds,

And in Rama's reign were established

All the four feet of Dharma.

Ahalya the stone, Guha, the vulture, the monkey,

The Bhil, bear and demon,

In mere sport, O Compassionate one, O ocean of
grace,

To see you slack,

Tulsidasa wishes to die of shame!

249

Many are the masters in this world whom I know
well,

In a little while are they pleased, and in a little
All heated up,

They aren't truly adept in loving,

They have little moral sense,

Their ways are all impure,

For, *Maya* has overpowered them all,

Even time and karma.

The great Danavas and Danujas were all most
deluded,

They'd all become swollen-headed with their power;

They conquered all the world-guardians,

In their delusion;

At first the gods were pleased and granted them
boons,

But they were soon annoyed

And wiped out their homes,

Not one felt ashamed of doing this to those

Whom they had graced at one time!

You, O Rama, pay attention to all the services
rendered By your servants,

Indeed you are true, worthy and gentle, O Rama,

The home of virtues and most holy,

With a benign face, lovely visage, you're constant

You know well the secrets of each and every heart,

There's none who cherishes the humble ones as you

Nor is there anywhere a pauper, a destitute like me.

In mercy does all dharma inhere,

Rama is a wishing-tree, my mind yearns for its shade,

Agonized is Tulsidasa—as I'm your offering,—

By the false dharmas of Kali!

If there had been any other master or a place of rest,

I wouldn't then have pestered the Lord,

Calling on Him again and again!

Indeed you've protected and nourished others as idle, As lazy and ill-favoured as I,

Therefore, O Compassionate One, you're my king,
O King Rama!

And Avadha is my city.

Neither have I served the lords of the quarters,

Nor the sun, nor Ganesha nor Gauri,

Nor yet have I regarded Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva
As my benefactors.

Though in Rama's Name is my well-being,

My way of life, my vow of love,

This faith is my elixir, all else is poison to me.

O Master of the orphaned ones, to whom shall I tell
The news of my companions?

For all, whether thieves or watchmen,

They're all in the Lord's hands.

Think, O King, have you ever delayed working

For your own cause, for the gods, or for the cause
Of the afflicted

Wherefore then this delay in my case alone?

Having heard of your ways do I have love and faith
in you,

But looking at the havoc played by the age of Kali,
I'm afraid.

O Raghunath, I offer myself to you,

It'll do for you to say,

'O Tulsidasa, you're mine, be not downhearted,
Tremble not with fright!'

251

O Rama, your nature and your ways, your virtues,
 Your influence and your power,
 They're known to Shiva, to Hanuman, Lakshmana
 and To Bharata,
 On the land of whose heart the gods' tree of love
 does stand,
 Bearing lovely flowers and fruits of delicious joy;
 By your nature you reckoned them as Master,
 Friends and brothers,
 Yet O Lord, they are careful of your love and fear
 you,
 Thus they swerve not from the ways
 Of the master-servant bond,
 The limits of love and good ways,
 Sustaining their Vow of love;
 Devotees like Shuka and Sanat, Prahlada and Narada
 And others tell
 How love-devotion to Rama comes
 From unwavering dispassion,
 But devotion comes not without knowledge,
 And knowledge is in your hands,
 So do the wise ones knowing this, prostrate
 themselves At your feet;
 The six Views are contradictory, nor are the Puranas
 unanimous;
 The Veda ever declares: 'It is not this, it is not this!'
 What then of the others? One thing alone is good
 And true,
 That through taking Rama's Name, even such ones
 as Tulsidasa are carried over.

252

O my father, by my own doing is my state sunk so
 low,

But I offer myself to you, set right the lot
 Of this greedy liar, I pray to you:
 Out of your own goodness have all been made good
 And whole;
 Overcome by disease is this body, the mind filthy
 With evil longings,
 And speech struck down by falsehood
 And calumnies of others.
 Such is the rule of spiritual means, there's no *Siddhi*
 Without their pursuits,
 Only some new grace of the Compassionate can
 Set it right.
 O you redeemer of the fallen, friend of the apostate,
 And the orphaned,
 O support, friend of the wretched, O God,
 But of these none am I, knowing it all,—
 I haven't fought the enemies, nor conquered them!
 Therefore do I burn in the three fires, having sown
 Do I reap.
 I'm disguised as a simple, straightforward holy man,
 But in my misdeeds, I surpass Kali himself!
 To my mind, the world hereafter is insipid,
 While I delight in the passions of this world.
 The days I've had so far I've passed
 In most evil company, O my king, but somehow
 I have taken
 O great king, the shelter of your Name,
 O Rama, you know only too well the glory of your
 Name!
 The Creator has fashioned no other way for my
 salvation.
 Millions on millions of my bitter deeds
 Deserve only your annoyance,
 Tulsidasa's shamelessness alone is worthy of your
 pleasure!

253

O Rama, take me under your refuge
 As you have ever done, no other is known
 To be as merciful in all the three worlds,
 In the past, present and to come!
 Who's there save you as protector of the humble
 and The afflicted ones?
 You do take care to feed and comfort all those
 Who are idle, sinners and without fortune,
 Yet O Lord, you're never out of the orphan's debt,
 While my Lord is so good and worthy,
 I'm yours, however I may be!
 Seeing the ways of the age, I feel deeply disgusted,
 As I'm your offering, pray, why do you not once
 say,
 Either through pleasure or through vexation,
 Either smiling or with a frown,
 'Tulsi, you're mine!'
 For, I swear by you, O King Rama, in that moment,
 My anguish will be uprooted and joys will be mine!

254

O Rama, your Name is both my mother and my
 father;
 My own kin and my lover, my teacher and Lord,
 My friend and companion;
 My vow of love for Rama's Name is my enduring,
 My unswerving wealth!
 Shiva churned the unbounded milky ocean
 Of his ten million deeds,
 Extracting from it the ghee of that Name.
 The power of faith in the Name is the very fruit
 Of life's four fruits,
 To remember it, giving up all deceit,

254 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

It's an excellent sacrifice.

The Name is a means to one's own worldly good,
It bestows the supreme good too,
There's no other help like Rama's Name.

Tulsidasa has said this out of his own nature,
It will truly come about that the Name of Sita's
Lord,
It is ever the consciousness of all consciousness!

255

O Rama, your Name is a wishing-tree
For the good people,
Remembering it, the threefold heat is done away
with,
Fulfilled is all desire, it's the lake for the lotus
Of good deeds,
Gain of gains, joy of joys, it is all,
The redeemer of the fallen, it's the fear of fear,
Easy to secure for both the prince and the pauper,
It's as comfort-giving as for each is his own home!
The Veda, the Puranas and Shiva himself,
They've all proclaimed, saying:
'Love for the Name is the fruit of all the four fruits!'
In my knowledge, a man who has no love and faith,
For such a Name, is but a *brute*.
Neither mother nor teacher can compare with it
It's a wise master, like the most gracious moon,—
As I'm your offering, O merciful to the wretched,
Sustain my love for the Name,
It'll be Tulsidasa's choicest boon!

256

I cannot remain without telling it, but if I speak out,
O Rama, it loses all its savour!

That, with the shelter of so excellent a Master,
 Your servant, false or true, still suffers
 The evil torments of time and karma!
 When I ponder over things, I find no substance,
 No essence anywhere in the world at all,
 They why and wherefrom do all these draw
 All their greatness?
 When I hear the Lord's greatness and look to myself,
 I'm appalled and my heart trembles and burns.
 No companion do I have, no good servant,
 No good wife, no lord,
 You're my mother and father,
 Tulsidasa speaks the truth,
 Yet mine is but little, it'll be set right somehow,
 Even if it go wrong—
 O Rama, I swear by you, it's your fame I want to
 save!

257

O friend of the wretched, if you turn away
 From this wretch, he has no other refuge!
 All seek their own good, but rarely one
 Who seeks the good of his servants.
 But, O Rama, your feet are good for all.
 The Stone, the beasts and bird, the Kol, the Bhil
 And the demon,
 All were turned from pieces of glass into pure gold,
 O home of compassion!
 The ground of the Dandaka forest grew holy
 By the touch of your feet, withered trees burst into
 Flower and fruit!
 Your Name is the redeemer of the fallen,
 O God, the helper of even those
 Who are hostile to you!

256 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

None other in the world dispels insufferable
 Sorrows and sins.
 O ocean of nobility, it's seemly to speak to you
 Of anything, high of low,
 You alone are like yourself—the banisher of
 Tulsidasa's woes.

258

Knowing you well have I forgotten you,
 O home of compassion!
 And yet I have the cheek to blame you, on the
 contrary!
 Unfortunate as I am, I've even broken the bond
 Which I'd established somehow
 With Him for union with whom yogis endeavour.
 There's no other for me, a storehouse of iniquities,
 In all the fourteen worlds.
 This I've learnt, having groped around everywhere,
 And like to a dog running behind a cart,
 Sometimes I leave *Maya's* great delusion,
 For only an instant, and return to it a moment later!
 There's no one my equal in being unfaithful to his
 master,
 I swear by the Lord, ten million times!
 Throw him from you door, then,
 This false and greedy pretender,
 Else, like to some wallowing sow, I'll befoul
 Water pure as elixir!
 Either reform me wholly and take me,
 Or else put an end to this low wretch,
 Consider both sides well, I shall no more entreat
 you!
 Tulsidasa has spoken the truth,
 Underlining it again and again,

If you delay longer, I'll sink the boat
Of your Name's grandeur!

259

Should my condition, by you set right,
Be once again worsted by my own deed,
Then, as I'm your offering, what will the world say,
Not to speak of the Veda?

By the Lord's indifference, or by the servant's sins,
Either way, O friend of the poor, shall this wretch
burn With anguish,

I have placed *vajra* upon my breast,
Being crushed by Kali,
Torments do I suffer, for who in another's power
doesn't?

But O compassionate one, only by protecting
Will your saga of praise be honoured,
At last, looking upon my lot, you wouldn't stay
indifferent.

Of the men of good deeds, the religious,
Saint and devotee, given to dispassion,
Which one wouldn't gain a place by his goodness?
But if your face remains turned away from the likes
of me,

Who else will be a refuge for cowards
And the feeble ones unworthy,
Who are staggering and fallen?

When the time comes, O merciful, the lot of all
changes;
But except for you no one else shall ever care for
me!

O Rama, I swear by this, I say in word, deed and
heart,
Tulsidasa will be saved through the Lord's saving
alone.

260

If the master grows indifferent,
 Then even the personal servant loses his place,
 So what of me?
 I say by the beat of drum, I'm being washed away
 by woes,
 No place in the world have I,
 What trust to put in the hereafter?
 But O Rama, I offer myself to you,
 I've gained by Rama's Name, if at all,
 Held Fast by the crocodile of karma, nature and
 time,
 By lust, anger, greed, delusion,
 And the most awful poverty.
 To set me free, only the great king; to bind me
 There are a million warriors,
 Save me, O Lord, save me, I burn in the three fires!
 Having known and been placed by love and trust
 Of all at this door,
 Being burnt by scalding hot milk, even the butter-
 milk
 I blow upon it to cool it, with my breath!
 Repeating my entreaties time on time, I've grown
 lean,
 Losing all the ways of caste and family and suchlike,
 Greedy am I only for the leftovers of your meal,
 I do not desire to bathe in milk!
 Neither have I wished for my good elsewhere,
 Nor have I walked the right path, in the right manner.
 I know well in my heart, here at your door is my
 weal.
 Tulsidasa, understanding this, has explained this
 Time on time to his mind,
 As also to the Lord Himself, having told Him,
 I'll be sustained by Him.

261

By my own efforts, it will not be done,
 No, not in million aeons should my liberation come,
 But O Rama, by you it'll be achieved
 In the quarter of a wink!
 You're altogether most wise, O house of compassion,
 What shall I say?
 For, I took mere ber-fruits in exchange
 For life's priceless jewel!
 Filthy is my mind, Kali has nourished my misdeeds
 Over and above,
 My tongue hasn't repeated your Name, but babbled
 Nonsense,
 Evil acts have I done, walking the wrong path,
 I wasn't good even by error;
 Even in childhood, I haven't been fair at games!
 If in imitation, or for display, or through good
 company,
 I happened to do a good deed, I published it abroad,
 While my evil acts I have hidden.
 My mind has nurtured passion, anger, and enmity,
 Along with the objects of the senses.
 To all these was I devoted, for them I had affection;
 By today's reckoning itself, I know of my past
 And my future states,
 That I accomplished nothing good whatever.
 The world says, however, that Tulsidasa loves
 And has faith in Rama,
 Be it true or false, still do I count on the support
 Of the Lord of Raghu's line.

262

It wouldn't be told,
 And yet I find it difficult not to tell of my
 wretchedness!

260 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

It gives me great joy, I swear, to tell the great,
 And yet when I think of the Lord's mighty grandeur
 And of my own tiny littleness,
 Of the holiness of the Lord, and of my gross
 smallness,
 My mind shrinks at the contrast, and is sore afraid,
 But in my mind, I turn to face Him,
 When I hear of the Master's reasonableness.
 By singing the Lord's praise, bowing their heads
 Before Him, with hands joined,
 Even the low ones have been blessed by your grace,
 Such is the perfection of your ways of love.
 In this court of yours, all is lost by pride,
 While through poverty and wretchedness
 Gained is one's upkeep.
 None was as fat as Ravana, none as lean as
 Vibhishana,
 It was clear how you are under love's sway.
 Cleverness here is like a thousand follies,
 While if one speaks out his plain and real feelings,
 All filthiness is blotted out.
 If one recalls always the vulture Jatayu,
 Sabari, Ahalya the stone
 Then never will one's love, and help from the Master,
 be lost.
 Your Name is a wishing-tree, fulfilling all desires,
 By remembering it all the evils and deceptions
 Of Kali grow feeble.
 O You house of compassion, Tulsidasa wants
 Of you this boon,
 May his state be that of a fish in the waters
 Of the gods' river Ganga of devotion to Sita's Lord!

263

O Lord, you know well your servant's heart,
 Which, like to the wife towards her beloved Master,
 Depending upon you, has taken love's vow, your
 good love,
 And her sweet way of life, her sweetness of thought
 And her movements ruled by acts,
 Good and evil, have I had contact with all,
 I have discerned the way of others and my own
 deeds.
 O Lord of the senses, I've no anxiety or fear
 For my own good or ill,
 I say this truly, swearing by Sita's beloved.
 You, Lord, are the master of knowledge and speech,
 You're both transcendent and indwelling,
 How then can the words of mouth, my heart's
 thoughts Be hidden from you?
 Tulsidasa is yours, and you alone his help,
 If I speak keeping anything back from you,
 May I be a fly fallen into ghee!

264

Listen to my words,—and then do what pleases you.
 Look both with your outward and your inner eyes,
 See and tell me if in all the three worlds,
 In the three times,
 There's anyone like to the Lord as your friend.
 Dwelling in these houses of the body,
 Ever new loves did you experience,
 You've tested false love which is exposed for what
 it is:
 The company of friends is only a commerce
 Of deceptions, of betrayal,
 Whenever one has something to gain from someone
 else,

262 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

He comes and meets him, falling at his feet;
 Cunning are the gods—have you recognised them
 well or not?
 They give but one, taking a million favours from
 you!
 All karma and all dharma without the Lord are but
 fruits of labour,
 Like to the offering on ashes, or a shower
 Over barren land,
 But He who in the beginning, middle and end is
 good,
 Who is always the weal of all,
 whose praise the Veda and the world proclaim,
 There's no master like Sita's Lord, storehouse of
 grace.
 How can you feel at pause, O you fool, having
 forgotten Him?
 He's the very life-breath of the soul,
 The supreme friend of life, the dearest,
 The One who makes the base ones holy,
 You honour Him not!
 O Tulsidasa, bring to mind what the generous One
 Did for you:
 His act at Chitrakuta, and awaken even yet!

265

My mind is pure, my mind full of a sweet taste,
 With my mouth I say I'm a servant of Sita's beloved,
 And yet, through what bad luck have I not known,
 I haven't formed well
 A true bond of love with the Lord?
 I wish for water and I get fire instead, elixir turns
 For me into poison,
 Whatever the saints have said about Kali's evil ways
 It's all true,

For I cannot distinguish between the sun and dark night!

Knowing me to be blind, it tells me to apply collyrium
Of the ghee of the tigress of the forest!

When I ponder well, hearing the remedy
For my ills,

Then the power of reason in my heart is taken away.

I shrink from speaking of my ills to the Lord

Lest His affection be watered down.

Therefore,—I am your offering,—call him to you,
And forbid him,

So that he may give up his attention now

To such a one as this stupid Tulsidasa.

266

The more I wish to draw closer to you,

O Compassionate One,

The farther away I get from you!

Through all four ages are you steadfast in essence,

O Rama!

And I'm yours though filled with faults and sins.

Estranged from you in the middle, meanwhile,

The vile wretch, Kali,

He has tricked me with his deceptions;

I was gold, he turned me into base metal, reduced
me From a king to a beggar,

From a wise one I've been turned evil-minded.

And wandered since through unnumbered hills and
woods,

I have burnt even without fire!

But when I went to Chitrakuta, seeing all his evil
ways,

Now am I frightened with strange fears of my own!

With bowed head I stand before the Lord

264 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

And say with hands joined,
 Hearing the adage that the thief, being recognized,
 Kills the victim,
 Tulsidasa has entreated the lord, speaking to Him,
 And is now relieved, free from care.

267

Having made a vow, beginning today, that
 I shall insist on remaining lying at Rama's door,
 And until He tells me, 'You are mine!',
 I shall not arise from there at all till I live.
 This is the oath I've taken on the Lord.
 Death's messengers are weary of pushing me away,
 But I haven't budged from the place.
 Being born many times in the world, I've endured
 Insufferable torments,
 Since I scorn hell, I've been expelled from there too.
 I shall leave only after taking
 That on which I insist.
 You're merciful,—as I'm your offering,—so you
 cannot But give it to me.
 Delay not therefore, for I am consumed by shame.
 If you shrink from saying 'He's mine' in public
 Because I'm so filled with sins,
 Then make Tulsidasa your own within your mind,
 For I am dreadfully afraid, having seen Kali.

268

Then shall I know for sure that you've made me
 yours
 That you've made me your own.
 When my mind will turn towards you
 With the natural ease it takes to sense objects
 When it shall love you spontaneously, abandoning

All deceit.

When, like a son is dear, you'll be dear to it,
 Like a close friend is trusted, it'll trust you,
 As a king is feared, it will fear you.
 When it'll count all its own good from the Master,
 And like to the chataka-bird, it'll swerve not
 From that one vow;
 When it will not be joyful on receiving great honour,
 Nor burn when affronted with disrespect;
 When it'll take with equanimity loss and gain,
 Sorrow and joy, good and ill, and when
 It shall abandon all the wicked ways of Kali;
 When, hearing the Lord's many virtues sung,
 It will be filled with joy,
 And my eyes shall shed tears!
 Then will Tulsidasa know that it trusts in Rama,
 And seeing His love, Joy will spring
 And fill the heart to overflowing!

269

O Rama, will you ever be dear to me
 As water is dear to the fish?
 Or as joy of life dear to creatures,
 As the jewel is to the serpent,
 Or as riches are dear to the greedy
 As by nature a young lady is beloved by a young
 man about town?
 Just so, arouse in my mind, O you mine of
 compassion,
 The longing for your holy and steadfast love!
 The Veda calls the accomplished Lord
 The bestower of the heart's desire;
 Now, O storehouse of mercy, as I offer myself to
 you,
 Give this longed-for gift to poor Tulsidasa!

270

Will you, O Rama, look towards me in compassion?
 And knowing in your heart that, good or ill,
 I'm your own servant, will you, O storehouse of
 mercy,
 Bring my unnumbered faults to an end?
 In birth after birth, the mind has conquered me,
 Will you now let me triumph over it?
 Then truly I'll be blessed with a lord, and you,
 Lord of the masterless,
 If you will not be afraid of my littleness,
 I entreat you, out of my own fear,
 As you're my supreme benefactor,
 Who else shall Tulsidasa tell—You are all I have,
 My Lord and teacher, my mother and my father, my
 All!

271

However I may be, still I'm your servant, O Rama,
 Do not forsake me, O ocean of compassion,
 O Lord of Koshala, O protector of the refuge-seeker,
 Pour down your mercy on me the way you do
 Already I'm ruined by others,
 Be not angry with one lost.
 You've always set everyone right in every way,
 Now do set my affairs right too!
 The world may mock at your gathering me up,
 Wherefore do you fear this?
 Rather, in my case, follow your own ways, your
 nature
 By which you made friends with monkey and
 boatman!
 Though I have done wrong, I am still yours,
 Forget not Tulsidasa:

Even if an arm be broken, it is bound to the neck;
Or just as a hurt eye gives pain,
Still does one seek to mend it!

272

Neither bear ill of me in your mind,
Nor turn your eyes away from me,
Listen O Rama, without you, neither in this world,
Nor in the hereafter, is anyone my benefactor.
Knowing me to be no good, worthless and lazy,
All my selfish companions abandoned me altogether,
Like a magic spell for the ague-fever is abandoned,
And never looked back on me afterwards, no,
Not even in forgetfulness,
seeing me devoid of devotion,
As one fallen outside the Veda,
Surrounded by the filth of the age of Kali,
Even the gods themselves, O God! abandoned me.
Nor was it unjust of them to do so,
For I'd sinned against them all
Screened by your Name, O Rama, I only fill my
belly,
Still am I called yours, O Lord.
It's all known to the world, please consider yourself:
Which is greater, the world or the Veda?
Whenever some day Tulsidasa's good is achieved,
It'll be achieved only through You,
And—as I offer myself to you,—if you delay,
His condition will everyday go from bad to worse,
Make him, therefore, speedily your own.

273

Leaving you, whom shall I tell,
Who else is my benefactor?

268 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

O friend of the poor, who else is a friend to his
 servant,
 Whose grace and mercy fall naturally on the afflicted,
 On the orphaned?
 Many a fallen one has crossed the ocean of existence,
 Even without a boat, without a raft even,
 For, O Rama, you had looked towards them,
 Be it a look of grace or anger, candour or error,
 Or just askance!
 Whichever one of these pleases you,
 Look on me early but once,
 Make Tulsidasa your own,
 Delay not, for now life's end is very near!

274

O Lord, whither shall I go? Where is place
 For a wretched and sorrowful one like me, O God?
 Who is there compassionate like you, O Master,
 Who could accept this refuge-seeker devoid
 Of all strength, and all limbs?
 Other masters accept the good services of the wealthy,
 of the skilful,
 But to nourish and protect the low,
 The worthless and the indolent
 It has all along suited the new Master, alone
 What shall I say to you,
 For the wise Lord knows all that is in my heart:
 In past, present and future, in all three worlds,
 Yours is the one support for one
 As foul-minded as Tulsi.

275

From door to door did I tell of my wretchedness,
 Baring my teeth and prostrating myself at the feet,

There are many gracious ones in the wide world,
Able in all ten quarters to do away with faults and sorrows,

Yet no one even spoke to me!

Just as a crooked insect does,

So did my mother and father

Give birth to my body and cast it away;

Why should I be angered, on whom should I lay blame?

It was my own misfortune that they shrank

Even from touching my shadow.

Seeing me afflicted, some holy man said:

"Grieve not in your heart?

Those who were even more beastly, perverse and sinful,

Rama did not abandon them when they sought refuge,

For, if anyone seek His shelter,

He cares for them till the very end."

Ever since Tulsi became yours, he became content,

He has been comforted even without love and faith;

And beholding the wonder of the Name,

The Master's nobility,

And the good that they've brought me to,

I shrink from shame, I'm filled with awe!

276

What have I not done, where have I not gone?

To whom have I not bowed my head?

Yet, O Rama, being born again and again in this world,

Until I became your servant,

I got misery and sorrows alone from the ten quarters.

Under the spell of hope, even though

I was your personal servant,

270 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

I spoke of my woes to mean masters,
 Lamenting over my lot, I told of my wretchedness
 From door to door
 Many a time, yet not even ashes reached my open
 mouth!
 Without food and clothing, rising up I ran about
 Here and there,
 Verily like some madman,
 Forgetting and forsaking all self-respect
 That is dearer than life itself.
 Time and again did I bare my empty belly to vile
 men,
 From moment to moment,
 It was simply greed that made me crave,
 Yet, O Lord, nothing came to my hand.
 To tell the truth, what dance is there
 That mean and shameless greed led me not to dance?
 Ears, eyes and my mind set upon the roads,
 But everywhere did I become fallen.
 I beat my head, my heart sank,
 I was sore disappointed, trembling,
 Only now have I come to the refuge of your feet.
 O Dasharatha's son, you alone are able.
 The three worlds sing your famed praises,
 Look now on Tulsidasa bowing down to you, I'm
 yours
 Whom your saga of praises has called,
 promising your arm's protection

277

O King Rama, saving you, who is my true benefactor?
 I tell it to all including my own Master,
 Having heard and pondered over what I say,
 Let Him, if He can, draw another line.

The companions of the body and soul together,
 They're a mere sewing together of stitches of
 delusion, Of falsehood:
 They're all like to the banana tree's core on
 consideration.
 Or mere pieces of paltry glass that glow,
 Being set among gold and jewels in a necklace!
 O my father, go through this 'Vinaya-Patrika'
 Of this wretched one,
 For Tulsidasa has written it, looking into the heart.
 Set down your signature on it,
 In keeping with your gracious disposition,
 And then, put it to the jury!

278

O Hanuman, O Shatrughna, O Bharata the jewel, O
 Lakshmana,
 Remember me, each one of you
 When you occasion find,
 Remember this poor wretch,—I offer myself,—
 And the hopes of the Lord's personal slave
 Will be fulfilled.
 In kings' courts, all speak well of the honest ones:
 Helping this one who has no refuge,
 You'll gain good fame, and merit, through a good
 deed,
 Your Master's grace, personal as well as
 The supreme good.
 Please to look for the opportunity to help and
 improve
 The lot of this Tulsidasa, this wretch,
 Please explain to the compassionate One,
 The humble one's protector,
 The way of love this helpless one has followed,
 As well as the limits of this dependant.

Having noticed the inclination of Hanuman's mind,
 And Bharata's liking it, Lakshmana has said:
 'Even in this age of Kali, O Lord,
 There's one slave of yours
 Who has kept up his faith, his love for your Name'.
 The whole assembly heard and stood up, exclaiming:
 'We know that this has indeed been his way.'
 Such is the grace of the gracious One towards
 The poor,
 That seeing this poor man,
 The Lord has taken his hand,
 Smiling, Rama said: 'It's true,
 I too remember!'
 Delighted, I bowed my head,
 And the Lord's signature being set down,
 Accomplished is the work of Tulsidasa, this orphan!

GLOSSARY

Aditi: daughter of Daksha and wife of Kashyapa. She is often known as the mother of the gods. Through her austerities which she performed with her husband, the Lord gave them the boon that he would become her son. In the Treta age she was the mother of Vamana, the Dwarf incarnation, and later became Kaushalya and her husband Dasharatha, Rama's parents.

Advaita: non-dual, the monist view of Vedanta, proposed by Shankaracharya, which contends that only Brahman is real, and *all* phenomenal existence is unreal, *Maya*.

Agama: a collection of holy books, the Veda, Tantra etc.

Agastya: a seer or Rishi born from the falling of the seed of Mitra and Varuna into a pitcher, when they beheld the nymph, Urvashi, hence 'pitcher-born'. The first teacher to have visited the South. He commanded the Vindhya to prostrate themselves before him; he drank the ocean in three gulps after it had offended him by washing away his worship things, and because he wanted to aid the gods in their wars with the Daityas who had hidden themselves in the waters. Later Agastya excreted the ocean waters as urine, and this accounts for its saltiness.

Ahalya: wife of the sage Gautam. She was extremely beautiful, and Indra seduced her. When Gautam discovered what she had done, he cast her out with a curse that she should be turned into a stone. This she remained until the touch of Rama's feet released her, and was reconciled to her husband. In the text, Ahalya is often referred to as the stone and the sage's or the brahman's wife.

Ajamil: a brahman of Kanauj who married a prostitute. When at time of death, three of Yama's servants came to take him away, he called his youngest son, Narayana, as he lay dying. Thus he was released from death and gained liberation. It is a popular story in Vaishnava literature showing the power of the divine Name.

Akampana: a demon, one of Ravana's army chiefs.

Ambarisha: a king and a devout worshipper of Vishnu, who was cursed by the sage Durvasa; Vishnu despatched his discus to pursue the sage; he finally had to fall at Ambarisha's feet who pacified the discus. Vishnu himself took the curse and was born ten times, leading to his ten incarnations.

Andhaka: a demon, slain by Shiva while stealing from heaven the Parijata tree.

Anjana, Anjani: Mother of Hanuman and wife of Kesari. Hauman was born from her union with Vayu, the Wind-god.

Arjuna: one of the five sons of Pandu (MBH), son of Indra from Kunti. Krishna agreed to be his charioteer in the great war. He won the hand of Draupadi, and the five Pandava brothers were jointly married to her, often mentioned as Arjuna's wife. Arjuna is also known as Partha, son of Pritha (Kunti) and as Dhananjaya.

Ak tree: a plant with medicinal properties *Calotropis gigantea* Hin. Ak or Akavan.

Atharva Veda: the fourth and latest Veda, containing much speculative hymns and magic spells.

Atikaya: a demon, Ravana's son

Avadha: Ayodhya,, ancient city, capital of Dasharatha, Rama's father, lying on the river Sarayu in mod. Faizabad. Also Oudh.

Babul: a thorn tree, *Acacia arabica*.

Badarika Ashram: a place sacred to Vishnu in the form of Nara-Narayana, in the Himalayas, mod. Badrinath, a famous pilgrim resort.

Bahera tree: a forest tree, its fruit has medicinal uses, Beleric Myrobalan, *Terminalia belerica*.

Bali: a demon king, grandson of Prahlada, distinguished for his virtues. Through his austerities he gained control of the three worlds and defeated even Indra. The gods appealed to Vishnu who incarnated himself as the Dwarf and humbled him. Bali is not to be confused with Bāli, the Vanara chief.

Bāli: the Vanara king whom Rama killed after his brother Sugriva sought his protection.

Banana tree: Skt. Kadali, *Musa sapientum*. The perishable nature of its stem and its absence of a hard core make it an apt poetic image for the impermanence of Kāyā or Samsara.

Bana: Vanasura, a Daitya, who was slain by Vishnu in his Krishna incarnation.

Banaras: Varanasi, Kasi, the celebrated holy city on the north bank of the Ganga, Tulsidasa's home for many years and the scene of the poet's death. Presided over by Shiva, it is called his city. According to popular belief, those who die there attain release from rebirth. Also known as Ananda-Vana and the land of Dharma.

Bel (Skt. bilva): the wood-apple, *Aegle marmelos*. The leaves of this tree are used for worshipping Shiva, the fruit is edible.

Betel-leaf (Hin. Paan, Skt. Tambula): the leaf of the betel-vine, piper betle) with spices is presented to a guest as one of the sixteen ways of honouring.

Bhagiratha: Son of Dilip, king of the solar dynasty and a decendent of Sagar whose sons were turned to ashes by Kapila's wrath. Bhagiratha performed austerities and thereby drew the river Ganga down from heaven to earth, and conducted it to the ocean, purifying the ashes of his ancestors (see Ganga).

Bhagirathi: see Ganga.

Bhairava: see Shiva.

276 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Bharata: Son of Dasharatha and his wife Kaikeyi, Rama's half brother. His mother in her son's interest, persuaded Dasharatha to send Rama into exile for fourteen years and to place her son on the throne instead. When Bharata discovered his mother's action, and on his father's death, followed Rama into the forest in an effort to persuade him to return and rule Ayodhya, but without success; he returned to Ayodhya and installed Rama's sandals in place of the absent monarch. Bharata married Sita's cousin Mandavi.

Bhava: see 1. existence; 2. Shiva.

Bhavani: wife of Shiva, born in the Himalayas, hence her name Parvati, the mountain maiden, Girija; Uma and Gauri are her other names. In her terrible aspect, she is known as Durga, Kali, or Kalika; she is the Shakti or female energy of Shiva; her mount is the lion. She is the mother of Ganesha and Kartikeya.

Bhil: an aboriginal tribe living in the Vindhya hills and famous as bowmen. By Bhil, the poet means Guha, the boatman, and by the Bhil woman, Sabari.

Bhima: the second of the Pandava brothers, son of Vayu. He was of great size and strength.

Bhisma: the grandfather of the Kauravas and Pandavas whose education he supervised. After the quarrel which heralded the Mahabharata war, he sided the Kauravas as their first Supreme Commander. He was finally killed by Arjuna.

Bhrigu: a Vedic sage who founded the Bhargava lineage in which was born Parashurama. He was sent by the Rishis to test the greatness of the gods which he did, and being disappointed with Shiva and Brahma, and finding Vishnu asleep, he stamped on his chest with his left foot. The Lord then awoke and showed the sage such humility that he declared him to be the greatest of the gods (Padma Purana, 62.6, 63.4).

Bija-Mantra: see note 108, 2

Bird, The: See Vulture (Jatayu).

Boar, The: The boar (Varaha) is one of Vishnu's incarnations.

Boatman, The: When Rama and Sita were going into exile, they arrived at the river Ganga and the ferryman at first refused to take them across, lest from the touch of Rama's foot his boat were turned into a human being, like the Stone into Ahalya. After Rama had let him wash his feet he agreed to ferry them across. This episode is often mentioned by the poet as showing the unaffected love of the simple boatman (Adhyatma Ramayana, I.6.2-5; Ramacharitamansa, II. 99 and Kavitavali II. 5-10).

Brahma: the creator of the universe and one of the triad of medieval Hinduism. Also called Vidhi, Viranchi.

Brahman: the ultimate Principle of reality of the Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta; equated by the poet with the *nirguna* form of Rama.

Buddha: see Vishnu (incarnations).

Buffalo-demon (Mahisasura): a most fierce and powerful Daitya who overpowered the gods, but was finally slain by Durga, or Kali (Devibhagavata Purana V.18)

Chakor-bird: the rock or sand partridge, Caccabis chukor, which according to Indian poetic fable, subsists only upon the elixir it derives from moonbeams.

Chakra: lit.wheel, Vishnu's discus, named Sudarsana.

Champaka: a wild magnolia, producing sweet-scented flowers.

Chataka-bird: the Rainbird, the pied crested cuckoo, Coccystes melano leucos, also papiha (Hin.). It is believed never to drink except the drops of rain in *Svati*, in October; at all other times it would rather die than take a drop of water, hence known as a bird whose love and devotion are of very high order.

Chintamani: gods' jewel, wishing-jewel

Chitrakuta: name of a hill in Banda district, celebrated as a place of pilgrimage (see note 264.5)

Churning of the ocean: The gods and Asuras were at war, and the former, being for the moment worsted, went to Vishnu for aid. He told them to churn the ocean using Mount Mandara as the churning rod and the serpent Vasuki

278 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

as a rope. There emerged eighteen most precious objects including the poison Kalakuta which was taken by Shiva before it destroyed everything; a heavenly horse; the elephant Airavata; the wishing Cow; the Parijata tree, the celestial ruby Kaustubha; Lakshmi; the elixir, Amrita etc. Vishnu then dispensed the elixir, deceiving the demons and giving it only to the gods (The Puranas and the Bhagavat, VI. 6-8 and MBH.)

Conch-shell (Sankha): one of the emblems of Vishnu.

Creator: see Brahma

Crow: see Jayanta

Custard-apple: (Hin. Kumhara, Skt. Kusmanda), a creeper, Beninkasa cerifers, producing a gourd-like fruit. The young fruits wither with very slight provocation, and thus provide a poetic image for weakness, tenderness etc.

Daitya: descendants of Diti by Kashyapa, a race of giants who warred on the gods and interfered with their sacrifices; they may be compared to Danavas and Danujas. Hiranyakasipu, Prahlada's father, was a Daitya king.

Dakini: a class of female imps attendant upon Kālī the mother-goddess and feeding on human flesh (see also Shakini).

Daksha: one of the Prajapatis, or great creators or fathers, a son of Brahma. His daughter Sati was married to Shiva. Daksha prepared a great sacrifice but Shiva was not included among the invitees. As a result, Shiva sent Virabhadra to wreck the sacrifice, and Sati committed self-immolation and was later born as Parvati and married Shiva.

Danava: Danu's descendents by Kashyapa, forty in number, giant-like creatures who warred on the gods. Also called Danuja.

Dandaka forest: a celebrated forest region, probably situated between the Godavari and Narmada rivers, in which Rama and Sita wandered during Rama's exile. It was extensive and had many hermitages, wild beasts and demons in it.

Dasharatha: King of Koshala, with seat in Ayodhya, father of Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna. Also referred to as the lord of Koshala or Avadha, by the poet.

Death: see Yama,

Deer, the: The form adopted by Maricha, Ravana's uncle to lure Sita and Rama in the Panchavati forest. When Sita saw its beauty, she asked Rama to get its skin for her, and while he was pursuing it Ravana abducted her. Maricha himself was a devotee of Vishnu.

Demon: see Vibhishana.

Devantaka: lit. 'slayer of gods', a demon-warrior, Ravana's son.

Dharma: the divinely established law of the universe. The dharma of any thing or any person is that which gives support to them. The poet also uses the phrases 'dharma of the castes and estates' referring to the social order ordained by the lawbooks (Manava Dharmasastra VI. 87, and he speaks of the four feet of Dharma (see Glossary, four).

Dhruva: See note 86.1. After the scene recorded, Dhruva withdrew from his father's court, joined a company of saints and through his austerities obtained the boon of being raised up as the Pole Star as a token of his unshakable devotion.

Diti: Kashyapa's wife and mother of the Daityas.

Draupadi: the daughter of King Drupad of Panchal and the wife of the five Pandavas, won by Arjuna at *Svayamvara*. When Yudhisthira gambled with his cousins the Kauravas, he lost all his possessions including his kingdom and his wife. Then Duryodhana and Duhsasana insulted her, dragged her by the hair into the assembly hall where the latter tried to tear off her clothes. But by a miracle, Krishna supplied her with other clothes. The episode is often referred to by the poet as an example of the Lord's compassion towards anyone who besought His aid. Also referred to as 'Nari', the wife of 'Nara' whose incarnation Arjuna was.

Drona: a brahman teacher of warfare who acted as the principal instructor to the Kaurava and Pandava princes in

the Mahabharata, and afterwards fought as a Supreme Commander on the Kaurava side in the great war. See Note 226 for the story of his death.

Durvasa: a celebrated, if irascible, sage whose cursing of King Ambarisha's led to Vishnu's ten incarnations.

Fourteen worlds: see also three worlds. According to different texts and systems, different number of worlds are specified. The fourteen here are: seven infernal regions, earth and six ascending upper regions, the highest being Satya-loka or the world of Brahma.

Fruits of life; the Four: according to Indian tradition, there are four aims of life, each yielding its own fruits. They are *Dharma*, following one's law of being, *Artha*, wealth and material well-being, *Kama*, sexual satisfaction and pleasure, and *Moksha*, deliverance from the cycle of rebirth, liberation.

Gana; lit, troops, also known as *pramathas*, Shiva's attendants often depicted as hosts of goblins, deformed dwarfs, ghosts, etc.

Ganapati: see Ganesha

Gandharva: an order of gods, heavenly singers and musicians.

Ganesha: son of Shiva and Parvati, with an elephant's head. He is regarded as remover of obstacles hence the name Vinayaka; being lord of *ganas*, he is known as Ganapati, too.

Ganges: Ganga, the celebrated river often referred to as the Gods' river. It sprang from the toes of Vishnu in its heavenly form, was called to earth by the sage-king Bhagiratha, to be received by Shiva upon his forehead, hence Bhagirathi. On reaching the earth, its flow disturbed the sage Jahnu who drank it up in anger, but later relenting let it out of his ear, hence its name Jahnavi. Also Tripathaga.

Garuda: Vishnu's mount often said to be a vulture, but also contains elements of the snake-eagle, often called the lord of birds, owing to his enmity to snakes, snakes' foe and serpent-consuming eagle.

Gautam: a sage, husband of Ahalya.

Ghee: clarified butter, an important ingredient in sacrifices.

Girija: lit. Mountain-born, Bhavani.

Goad: (Skt. Ankusa) the elephant-goad is one of the marks on the feet of Vishnu

Gokul: the pastoral region around Vrindavana near Mathura, on the banks of the Jamuna river. Here Krishna passed his childhood.

Goose (Skt. Marala, Hansa): Manasarovar in the Himalayas is a favourite breeding ground; its migration and flight was a popular theme of Indian poets (C.f. Kalidasa, Meghaduta, 12). In Indian poets' fancy, it is able to separate water and milk in drinking.

Gopal: see Vishnu.

Gopis: the wives of the cow-herds of Braja. Owing to their love for the youthful Krishna, they came to assume a special role in mediaeval Vaishnavism. The relationship of the human soul to God was conceived in terms of the yearning of the Gopis for Krishna.

Govind: see Vishnu.

Guha: a headman of the forest tribe of Nisadas in central India, who served Rama during his wandering in the forest. He became a pattern of the Lord's compassion upon even an aboriginal, and of the devotion of such a person.

Guru: teacher or preceptor, a most important element in Indian system of education and thought.

Hanuman: a monkey warrior who assisted Rama in his search for Sita and played a leading role in her recovery. Son of Anjana and Kesari, but his real father was Vayu, the Wind-god, thus he is also known as Son of Wind. For his childhood exploits and gaining *Siddhis*, see note 25. Because of his service and devotion to Rama, he is often called Rama's messenger, and as such he plays an intermediary role between Rama and his devotees, especially so in case of the poet.

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282 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Hara: see Shiva.

Hari: see Vishnu.

Harlot: see Pingala.

Hatha yoga: a variety of Yoga which concentrates upon physical exercises, breathing exercises, and so on. It is particularly associated with the teaching of Gorakh Nath (c. twelfth century A.D.).

Hawk: see note 90.

Hiranyakasipu: the father of Prahlada whose hostility to his son's devotion to Vishnu led to Vishnu incarnating himself as the Man-lion (Nrsimha)

Holi: a spring festival which takes place at the full moon of the month of Phalgun, associated with bonfires and the throwing of coloured water, etc.

Horse-sacrifice: the *ashvamedha* is a sacrifice performed since Vedic times by kings desirous of offspring, power and glory. The horse was let loose to wander for a year and any other ruler into whose territory it might stray was bound either to submit or fight the sacrificer.

Hrishikesa: see Vishnu.

Hunchback maid: Kubja, lit. hunchbacked, a maid servant of Kansa,

Hunter: see 1. Guha; 2. Valmiki; 3. note 214.

Indira: see Lakshmi.

Indra: chief deity of the Vedic period, later overshadowed by Vishnu and Shiva, though still remembered as the lord of the gods, wielding his *vajra* to smite his foes. He seduced Gautam's wife Ahalya. Enraged by Krishna's dissuading the people of Braja from his annual worship sent a great rain-storm to punish them. His son, Jayanta, tried to molest Sita in the form of a crow. Also called Shakra, and Paka's foe. He is one of the eight world-guardians.

Indrayana fruit: a creeper whose fruit has a beautiful orange colour but is extremely bitter to eat, *Citrullus colocynthis*.

Janaka; the king of Mithila and father of Sita, also called Videha.

Janaki: lit. Janaka's daughter, see Sita.

Jatayu: see Vulture.

Javas plant: *Alhagi maurorum*, a variety of short grass growing on riverbanks; it remains green during the hot weather, but withers during the floods of the rainy season.

Jayanta: son of Indra who was attracted by the sight of Sita, and pecked her in the form of a crow. Rama raised his bow to shoot him, but being overcome by compassion, blinded him in one eye instead.

Kabandha: a hideously deformed demon whose head was driven into his belly by Indra. He was slain by Rama, relieved of his curse and was restored to his original form as a Gandharva.

Kol: a forest tribe of east central India speaking a language of the Munda family.

Koshala: the country on the Sarayu river whose capital was Ayodhya. Dasharatha was its ruler at one time, Rama's homeland.

Krishna: lit. the Black One, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu; he played an important part in the Mahabharata as Arjuna's charioteer, Parthasarathi, with whom his discourse on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is known as the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The pastoral childhood of Krishna is dealt with in *Harivamsa* and *Bhagavata Purana*. He has many names, Nanda's son, King of Yadus, Gopal, Govind, Shyama, etc. He retired to Dwarka in Saurashtra after he deposed Kansa at Mathura. See note 50 for the miracle of lifting the mountain Govardhana; see also glossary, Gopi, Kaliya, Kansa, Vishnu.

Kumbhakarna: a demon known for his sleeping long hours, brother of Ravana.

Kuru King: see Duryodhana.

Kubera: a demigod, chief of the Yakshas, keeper of the treasures of heaven; giver of wealth and one of the world-guardians.

Kailasa: a mountain in the Himalayas, north of the lake Manasarovara, famous as the home of Shiva. A place of pilgrimage along with the lake.

Kalakuta: the first object produced by the churning of the ocean. also called Halahala, lit. deadly posion. This poison would have burnt up the entire creation had not Shiva, out of compassion, taken and consumed it, holding it within his throat, which thereon turned blue. Hence Shiva is called *Nilakantha* (3).

Kali: see Bhavani.

Kaliya: a great many-headed serpent which lived in the river Yamuna. It was subdued by the child Krishna, who danced upon its hood, it was driven away to the ocean (*Bhagavata Purana*, X.16-17).

Kalki: see Vishnu (incarnations), the last incarnation.

Kalanemi: a demon, uncle of Ravana, who tried to kill Hanuman, but was outwitted by him, and finally flung through the air to Lanka where he fell at Ravana's feet (*Ramacharitamanasa*, Lanka Kanda 55-60).

Kamala: see Lakshmi.

Kamata, Kamada-giri: The desire-fulfilling mountain, a part of the hill of Chitrakuta, so named because it is reputed to fulfil all desires a pilgrim may express to it.

Kansa: son of Ugrasen; the evil king and tyrant of Mathura, who played a Herod-like role at the birth of Krishna and was later slain by him.

Karira plant (karila) : a leafless thorny plant, *Copparis aphylla*, which grows very commonly in the countryside of Braja.

Karma (deeds, actions): the word is associated particularly with cumulative effects of all actions predetermining the direction the individual soul moves from one birth to another. The influence of karma is therefore closely linked with the progress of rebirth.

Karna: half brother of the Pandava brothers, born of the sun-god's seed to Kunti, He took the side of the Kauravas in the great war and was killed by Arjuna.

Kartikeya: son of Shiva and Parvati, also known as Skanda, spoken of as six-headed. He is regarded as the Commander in chief of the army of the gods.

Kasi: see Banaras.

Kaumodaki: the mace carried as a weapon by Vishnu, hence one of his emblems.

Kaushalya: wife of Dasharatha and mother of Rama; the daughter of Koshala.

Kausika: see Visvamitra.

Kesari: husband of Anjana, and supposed father of Hanuman.

Keshava: see Vishnu.

Khara: a demon, younger brother of Ravana, slain by Rama at Janasthan in the Dandaka forest.

Khasa: an aboriginal tribe, living in the foothills of the Himalayas, Dehradun district, and in Nepal.

Kinnara: mythical beings with the form of men and heads of horses, reputed to be celestial musicians.

Kirata: an aboriginal mountain tribe, often mentioned in early Indian literature, in eastern India and Nepal. Tulsidasa uses the word to refer to Valmiki who before his conversion was a hunter, perhaps even a member of the tribe, though this seems rather unlikely.

Kok-birds: (Skt. Chakravaka), *Casarca ferruginea*; tradition has it that the pair can only remain together by day, at night they are separated. Hence the rising sun is the symbol of their reunion.

Lakshmana: Rama's younger brother, son of Dasharatha and Sumitra, twin brother of Shatrughna; he was completely devoted to Rama and voluntarily accompanied and served him during the exile. He is said to be an incarnation of the Shesha, the serpent, called Ananta.

Lakshmi: consort of Vishnu; popularly known as goddess of wealth and fortune, Sri. She was born from the ocean when it was being churned. Hence, Ocean's daughter, associated with lotus, she is Kamala. Also Indira.

286 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Lanka: the old name for the island of Ceylon, and of its capital city, seat of the demon Ravana.

Lord of birds: see Garuda.

Lotus, water-lily: many different words are used for it, there are at least seven varieties; the poet refers to lotuses or water-lilies of blue, red, pink, gold and white colour, and to those that bloom at night.

Love, Love-god (Kamadeva): the god of love, husband of Rati, was reduced to ashes by Shiva, Love's foe, after he had struck him with a flowery dart and brought him under love's sway (Matsya Purana 154.227-55)

Madhava: see Vishnu.

Madhu: a demon slain by Vishnu

Mahesha: see Shiva.

Mahisa (Mahisasura): see Buffalo-demon

Mahodara: lit. 'great belly', a demon warrior, son of Ravana.

Manas-lake (Manasarovara): see note 154

Mandakini, river: Sometimes a synonym of the Ganga, but also a river near Mount Chitrakuta where Rama and Sita stayed during their wanderings in the forest. A pilgrim place.

Mandāra: a mountain used by the gods in the churning of the ocean. sometimes identified with a hill in mod. Bihar.

Mandāra: a tree having bright red flowers, *Erythrina indica* or Coral tree.

Mandavi: daughter of King Janaka's brother, who married Rama's brother, Bharata.

Mandodari: daughter of the *Lavana* Maya, principal wife of Ravana.

Man-lion (Nrsimha): the incarnation of Vishnu as the Man-lion to deliver the world from the Daitya Hiranyakasipu's tyranny, linked with the story of Prahlada. This terrible form, half man, half lion was manifested from a stone pillar, and the poet uses it as an explanation of the way people started to worship stones (see Bhagavat Purana VII.8; see also Vishnu).

Mārīcha: a demon follower of Ravana, son of Taraka; he took the form of the magic golden deer to lure Rama away so that Ravana might abduct Sita (see Deer)

Markandeya: a sage, see note 60.

Maruts: the Vedic storm-gods, offspring of Shiva.

Maulsri. (Bakula): a tree with fragrant white flowers, *Mimusops elengi*

Maya: a Danava, father of Mandodari, not to be confused with Māyā.

Maya: the veiling force of nature which leads to the illusion of duality, or separateness from Brahman, the entire creation. According to Advaita Vedanta, the unreal, false phenomenal world as opposed to Brahman. Sometimes translated by illusion.

Meghanada: a demon, the famous son of Ravana, a valiant warrior, slain in battle by Lakshmana, Rama's brother.

Mind (Mana): In Indian thought the various functions of mind have been described by different terms, 'the same antahkarana . . . is called buddhi, manas, ahankara and Citta. I have followed Allchin in translating *mana* by mind, although as he says, 'its range in Hindi is rather different from that of mind in English, and often 'heart' or 'soul' might be preferred.

Mithila: the ancient city, capital of Videha, in eastern India in which Janaka, Sita's foster-father ruled, situated in mod. North Bihar.

Modaka sweets (Hin. laddu): a sweet made of balls of pulse or rice flour and sugar, traditionally loved by Ganesha. The poet refers to sleeping modakas in syrup (224).

Moneky: see Sugriva, also see Hanuman.

Mukunda: name of Vishnu, see Vishnu.

Munda: a demon slain by Durga (Devi Bhagavat).

Muni: generally translated as 'sage' an ascetic.

Munja: a variety of grass, *Saccharum Arundinaceum*.

Murari: the demon Mura's foe, see Vishnu.

288 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Musk-deer: the hornless musk-deer found in the Himalayas, has long been known as the source for musk, a secretion found in a glandular sac in the abdomen of the male. The Indian poetic fancy is that the deer wanders far and wide searching for the sweet scent, not knowing itself to be the source (see note 244).

Nala: king of Nisadha, husband of Damayanti, lost his kingdom through gambling and abandoned his wife. He then wandered away into the forest and was eventually reunited with her.

Namuchi: a Daitya, obtained from Brahma the boon that he should neither be killed by anything wet or dry, nor by any weapon. Finally Indra was able to kill him with a foam-flake, told by a heavenly voice.

Nanda: a cowherd chief, headman in Gokul in whose house the infant Krishna was brought up as his son.

Narada: son of Brahmā, a celebrated Rishi, a devotee of Vishnu.

Through a curse, he was unable to remain in one place but always had to wander on. Inventor of the musical instrument *vina*. Called the gods' Rishi, he instructed Vyasa to compose the *Bhagavata Purana*. Reputed to carry stories in his wanderings.

Nigamas: holy texts, the Veda, etc.

Nim (Skt. Nimba), a tree with bitter fruits, leaves are chewed, *Asadirachia indica*, its twigs are cut and used for cleaning the teeth. It is regarded sanitary to sleep under the tree.

Nine-doored city: see note 203.

Nine sentiments: The nine basic sentiments from which aesthetic experience derive in Indian dance, drama, music and poetry, erotic, comic, pathetic, heroic, terrific, fearful, loathsome, astonishing and pacific.

Nirvana: extinction of all attachments, final liberation from the cycle of rebirth. The term is primarily associated with Buddhism.

Nisāda: a forest tribe, its headman Guha served Rama with devotion during his exile, and is referred to by Tulsidasa as the Nisāda (144).

Nisumbha: a demon, brother of Sumbha.

Nriga: a virtuous king who unwittingly gave away a calf belonging to a certain brahman, and after a dispute arose, he was cursed to remain as an invisible lizard until Krishna came and released him (Ramayana, Uttar Kanda 53; Adhyatma R., v. 2)

Pairs of opposites (Skt. dvandva): the pairs of opposites, heat and cold, sorrow and joy, are a feature of Indian systematic thought from the time of Upanishads onwards. They represent the experience of the elements by the senses (204.).

Pandavas: the five sons of Pandu, the brother of king Dhritarastra, one of the two factions in the Mahabharata war: Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva.

Parashu-Rama: the sixth incarnation of Vishnu as a brahman who was born to deliver the Earth from the domination of the warrior caste. He is renowned for the axe he carried and is thus known as the axe-bearer. Also Bhrigunath as a descendant of Bhrigu. He also appears during Rama's life, when he came in anger at Rama's breaking of Shiva's bow and winning Sita's hand (*Ramacharitamansa*, *Ramayana*, etc.)

Parikshita: the grandson of Arjuna. While yet within the womb of Uttara his mother, he was killed by Asvatthama, but brought back to life by Krishna. He succeeded Yudhisthira on the throne of Hastinapura.

Partha: see Arjuna.

Parvati: see Bhavani.

Payasvini, river: a small stream, tributary to Mandakini near Chitrakuta.

Phalguna: the month of Hindu calendar corresponding to February-March, on the full moon day of which the Holi festival is celebrated. Also Arjuna's name.

Pingala: The story of Pingala, the prostitute is as old as the *Mahabharata*, often repeated in later Vaishnavite literature. She was a lady of easy virtue and once while waiting for her lover's arrival until deep into the night, it occurred to her that had she spent her time in praising God instead, she might have gained liberation. From that moment she changed her way of life and devoted herself to the adoration and worship of the Lord, thereby achieving her supreme aim. She is also referred to as the prostitute or the harlot.

Poet: see Valmiki.

Prahlada: a Daitya prince whose father Hiranyakasipu conquered the three worlds, even occupying the gods' heaven. While still a boy Prahlada was an ardent worshipper of Vishnu,—his father, a Shiva worshipper—tried to convert him and failing, grew enraged and tried to kill him. Once when, Prahlada asserted the Lord's omnipresence, the king in his rage struck his sword against the marble pillar of his hall, asking Prahlada if he was in the pillar too when the Lord manifested himself as the Man-lion and killed him with his nails, and made Prahlada the ruler in his place. For medieval Vaishnavas Prahlada's story is most significant, exemplifying the steadfast devotion and forbearance of the son, his calling upon the Lord's Name, his forgiveness of his father, etc. (*Bhagavata Purana*, VII.1-8)

Prayaga: the celebrated place of pilgrimage at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna near mod. Allahabad. The junction is clearly marked by different tinges of the waters of the two rivers.

Puranas: traditionally, there are eighteen Puranas, they contain compilations of cosmological and historical materials, mainly associated with one or other of the great sects of medieval Hinduism, i.e., *Vishnu Purana*, *Shiva Purana*, *Bhagavata Purana*, *Matsya Purana*, etc.

Pushpaka: the name of an aerial chariot with power of flight, captured by Ravana from Kubera, and later used to carry Rama and his party back from Lanka to Ayodhya at the end of the war with Ravana.

Putanā: a female demon, who attempted at Kansa's behest to poison the infant Krishna by putting poison on her breasts and offering to suckle him. Krishna, however, crushed her breast between his hands and then sucked out her life (Bhagavata Purana, X. 6)

Radha: one of the cowherd women of Braja, daughter of Vrisabhanu, who was specially beloved by Krishna. Radha is not only worshipped with Krishna, but there is also a separate *sampradaya*, worshipping Radha alone.

Raga: in Indian classical music the *raga* is the basic unit of melody, sharing also some of the characteristics of mode or scale.

Raghu: a king of the solar dynasty, ancestor of Rama, who hence bears the name Raghava, Raghuvara, Raghupati, Raghuvira, Raghunath, etc. (see Rama).

Rahu: a Daitya who seizes the sun and the moon, thereby causing eclipses. The son of Simhika, disguised himself at the churning of the ocean, and seized the elixir, drinking some of it when he was recognized by the sun and the moon, and Vishnu cut off his head and hands and placed him among the stars.

Rain-bird: see Chataka.

Raktabija: see note 128.

Rama: Vishnu incarnate, his deeds were first recorded by Valmiki's *Ramayana*, from which most later versions of the Rama story derive including Tulsidasa's *Ramacharitamansa*. King Dasharatha ruled in Ayodhya, and was childless. As a result of a great sacrifice to obtain offspring presided over by Rishyashringa, four sons were born to him: Rama to Kaushalya, Bharata to Kaikeyi, and Lakshmana and Shatrughna to Sumitra. When the boys were sixteen, the sage Visvamitra visited Dasharatha and requested him to permit Rama and Lakshmana to accompany him to protect his sacrifice from demon attacks. He agreed, the boys went with him and killed many demons and liberated Ahalya. They then visited Mithila where Rama won the hand of Janaka's daughter Sita, and married her.

292 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

After their return to Ayodhya the people wanted that Dasharatha should make him prince-regent. But Bharata's mother, jealous for her son, asked for a long-deferred boon from the king that he would banish Rama to the forest, and make Bharata the prince-regent instead. Rama insisted upon honouring the boon, and left the city accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana; they travelled south across the Ganga, encountering the boatman Guha, and reached Chitrakuta. There they were visited by Bharata who came to ask Rama to return to the city, and brought news of the death of his father. Rama still refused, and Bharata took a pair of his sandals and installed them in the capital in his place.

The demon Ravana now plots to steal Sita and succeeds with the help of Mārīcha in the form of a deer, and carries her off to Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana go in search of her, enlisting the support of Sugriva, and an army of monkeys and bears. Hanuman finds Sita, tells her of Rama's approach, and burns the city of Lanka. They build a bridge of stones across the straits, Rama and his army cross over and a great battle ensues. Ravana and his family are killed and his hosts are routed, but not before Lakshmana is grievously wounded and cured by herbs brought from afar by Hanuman. They return to Ayodhya in the car Pushpaka, having installed Ravana's brother Vibhishana on the throne of Lanka. The different *Ramayanas* give different versions of the conclusion. Sita demonstrates her purity by entering the fire, and finally calls upon the Earth to accept her. In some versions she is later banished by Rama on account of the calumnies of the washerman, and lives in a forest hermitage where she bears two sons while Rama established his ideal rule in Ayodhya.

In the *Vinaya-Patrika*, Rama is known by many names, *Raghava*, *Raghupati*, *Raghuvira*, *Raghuvara*, *Raghunayaka*, *Raghuraya*. He is Ramachandra, Lord of Koshala, Gosvami, and Lord of *Maya*, as well as Lord of Sita, Lord of Janaki, etc.

Ramayana: the name of the first great epic poem of the story of Rama, composed in Sanskrit by the poet Valmiki,

supposedly Rama's contemporary. In certain versions, Valmiki also gave refuge to Sita and brought up her two sons, Lava and Kusha, who were born in his hermitage, and were later trained by him to sing the Ramayana story.

Rati: the wife of the Love-god, Kamadeva.

Ravana: the demon-king of Srilanka (Ceylon), who stole Sita, and carried her away to his city. He had ten heads, hence his name Ten-head, Ten-neck. His wife was Mandodari, and he had many sons including Meghanada, Atikaya, Devantaka.

Rebirth: the whole process of rebirth and the cycle of transmigration which constitutes existence, bhava, lit. becoming; the cycle is modulated by actions, karma, good or bad. This group of concepts is common and fundamental to almost all schools of Indian thought.

Rigveda: the first and probably oldest of the four Vedas.

Rishi: generally translated by 'seer' or 'sage'. The Rishis are inspired beings and poets, who are supposed to have 'heard', i.e., been divinely inspired to compose the hymns, or mantras.

Rudra: see Shiva.

Rudras: an order of supernatural beings, eleven in number, associated with the Ganas of Shiva.

Sadhu: In Tulsidasa's work, the word is generally used with two interlinked connotations: i) generally a virtuous, pure and holy person, ii) more specially, one who has renounced the world and devoted himself to religious disciplines.

Sagara: king of Ayodhya who had sixty thousand sons, whose great impiety and pursuit of a sacrificial horse led them to disturb Kapil Muni who turned them to ashes. Their delivery was accomplished by Bhagiratha bringing down the Ganga (Vishnu Purana IV. 4)

Sahasrarjuna: the thousand-armed king of Mahismati renowned for his prowess was killed by Parashu-Rama. During his rule for many years, he even took Ravana a prisoner.

Samadhi: lit. putting everything together, the ultimate stage of the eightfold Yogic meditation, in which the individual becomes one with the object of meditation, preparatory to last things.

Sama Veda: the third of the four Vedas, consisting mainly of hymns from the Rigveda selected and arranged for chanting or singing.

Sampati: see note 28.

Sanaka: one of the four 'mind-born' sons of Brahmā, often referred to by the poet as a group, Sanakadi, Sanaka and the others.

Sandalwood: the tree whose wood is highly perfumed, so held in great esteem, and used in ritual worship, Skt. Srikhanda, chandana, *Santalum elbum*.

Sarang: the name of Vishnu's bow.

Sarasvati: see Sharada.

Sheshamum seed (tila): an oilseed whose product has wide domestic *Sheshamum indicum* use.

Seven constituents: Indian medicine, the body's seven constituents are: chyle, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow and semen (203. .)

Sabari: a woman of the aboriginal Sabara tribe who had served the sage Matanga, acquired devotion and dwelt in a forest hermitage when Rama was wandering in search of Sita, she entertained him and gave him fruits to eat. Thereupon Rama told her the ninefold devotion, and she entered final beatitude in her ecstasy. Sabari symbolizes for Tulsidasa the power of simple devotion and continually referred to in the Vinayas.

Sachi: a small glistening coloured fish, *Cyprinus saphore*.

Shakini: a class of female imps similar to Dakini.

Shakra: see Shiva.

Shankar: see Shiva.

Sharada: the goddess of learning and the arts, wife of Brahmā later, Sarasvati.

Shatrughna: Rama's youngest half brother, son of Sumitra, husband of Shrutakirti.

Shesha: the serpent-king who resides in Pātāla, he is called thousand-headed, thousand-tongued, and Ananta. He is said to have formed a couch for Vishnu when he slept upon the waters. Lakshmana in the *Ramayana*, and Balarama in *Harivamsa*, are said to be the incarnations of Shesha.

Shisupala: king of Chedi, through his mother Shrutasravā, Krishna's cousin; he was slain by Krishna when he exceeded the hundred abuses which he had promised to his aunt to forgive. said to be Hiranyakasipu and Ravana in former births.

Shiva: one of the principal gods of medieval Hinduism, one of a triad with Brahma and Vishnu, representing the destroyer. Has many names by which he is addressed by devotees, Tulsidasa has great respect for Shiva, Shankar, Shambu, Mahesha, Hara, Rudra and Bhava, also Visvanatha, Purari, Tripurari, Vamadeva, and Bhairava in his terrible form. He is the lord of yogis, attended by hosts, his *ganas* and imps and Nandi, the bull, his mount, Nilakantha, having drunk the Kalakuta, the burning poison at the churning of the ocean, husband of Bhavani, Bhola Nath, the simpleton Lord, and is the presiding deity of his city Banaras or Kasi, where he gives liberation to the dying. He is said to have consumed hemp; the linga, the phallus is his chief emblem. He is also the King of Dancers, as Nataraja, and dances the *Tandava* to destroy the universe. He is also the Love-god's foe, having reduced Kamadeva to ashes when he struck him with his flowery dart to bring him under love's sway. He is father of Ganesha and Kartikeya, and has many stories, with the trident, the crescent-moon and the Ganga over his head. He is most unpredictable, but for the poet he is the greatest devotee of Rama, and so most adorable. One of the most delightful poems in the *Vinaya-patrika* is 14, where Shiva has become the forest, and Parvati has come to him in the form of Spring. There are twelve *padas* in the *Vinaya-patrika* in praise of Shiva.

Shiva-linga: the phallic emblem of Shiva, not referred to in the Veda, but often in the *Mahabharata* and later texts.

296 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Sri: see Lakshmi.

Sri-Vatsa mark: a special mark on the breast of Vishnu. Also one of the eight most auspicious signs of the Jains.

Shruti: the Veda, texts of highest canonical value, having been 'heard' before being composed, i.e., revealed to the Rishi.

Shrutakirti: the wife of Shatrughna, Rama's youngest half brother.

Shuka: a sage, son of Vyasa; Shuka is famous as the narrator of the *Bhagavata Purana* to King Parikshita.

Shulapani: name of a demon; also an epithet of Shiva.

Sumbha: a demon, brother of Nisumbha, killed by Durga.

Siddha: lit. accomplished ones, those who have obtained one or more of the eightfold Siddhis, human or semi-divine.

Siddhis: see Eightfold *Siddhis*

Sindhu's son: Jalandhara (see note 49.)

Simhikā: a female demon, mother of Rahu, who tried to swallow Hanuman but was destroyed by him as he was crossing the ocean.

Silk-cotton tree: Skt. Syamala (Hin. Semar, Simar), *Bombax malabricum* or *Gossampinus malabricum*. A tree with handsome red flowers and long finger-like fruits which burst and reveal a silky cotton.

Sita: the daughter of Janaka, king of Videha, hence Janaki and Vaidehi as well as Maithili are her other names, the wife of Rama. She was 'born from the plough', as King Janaka was ploughing the land himself during a famine, and was adopted and brought up by him. She chose to accompany her husband into exile in the forest, was abducted by Ravana and held prisoner in Srilanka, whence she was rescued by Rama. (see Rama also).

Six adversaries (six enemies): The poet speaks often of the predominating passions as the six enemies they are: lust (kama), anger (krodha), greed (lobha), infatuation (moha), intoxication, and selfishness (matsarya), also in *Bhagavata*

Purana (IV.22.40) and in the *Adi Grantha* of the Sikhs from which *mada* is usually dropped.

Six flavours: they are sharp, sour, pungent, sweet, astringent and salty.

Six sciences or Six Schools of Philosophy: *Nyaya*, *Vaisesika*, *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Mimamsa* and *Vedanta*.

Six snakes: see six adversaries above.

Smriti: religious texts of the second order, 'remembered' by the sages rather than 'heard' as Sruti, they include the Dharmashastras, epics, lawbooks, etc.

Snake's foe: Garuda.

Some sacrifice: Originally Soma was the fermented juice of the plant, prepared with other ingredients and offered as libation. Later personalized as a god and identified with the moon.

Son of Wind: Hanuman.

Stone; see Ahalya.

Sudam (Sudama): a boyhood companion of Krishna. After they were separated, Sudama lived in great poverty. At his wife's suggestion he went to visit his old friend at Dwaraka, taking with himself as a gift all he could afford, four handful of parched grain. Krishna received him with joy, and having eaten the grain, gave him great riches in return (*Bhagavat Purana*)

Sugriva: the monkey king whom Rama instated in place of his brother Bali.

Sumeru: a mountain said to be the hub of the world, also sometimes Meru.

Sumitra: one of king Dasharatha's wives, the mother of Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

Suniti: Mother of Dhruva

Suruchi: wife of King Uttānapada, and step-mother of Dhruva.

Surya: the sun, one of the chief gods of Vedic period and is said to ride in a chariot drawn by seven horses. Puranas regard Surya as one of the world-guardians.

Svati: one of the twenty-eight nakshatras, or lunar asterisms, see rain-bird above for the legend of the chataka-bird.

Tamāl: a dark-barked tree with white blossoms, *Xanthochymus pictorius*.

Tamarind: the seeds of the tamarind tree, *Tamarindus indica*, are contained in a fibrous pod and are used to make a tart, *chutney*.

Tandava dance: a wild dithyrambic dance performed by Shiva and his consort, at the end of the universal epoch.

Taraka: a female demon, whose death was encompassed by Rama and Lakshmana at Visvamitra's behest, out of compassion Rama sent her to his own abode.

Ten faculties: the ten *indriyas* or sense-powers, the five powers of cognition, hearing, feeling, seeing, taste and smell, and the five acting powers, speech, procreation, excretion, grasping and motion. This classification is found in several Indian systems of thought, notably the Samkhya. (C.f. MBH 12. 267.12)

Ten-head, Ten-Neck: see Ravana.

Ten Quarters: The four cardinal points and four intermediate quarters, viz., north, south, east and west, north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west, plus the two poles.

Thousand-armed: Sahasrarjuna.

Three ages: time past, present and future.

Three conditions: waking, dream and deep sleep (*Mandukya* Upanisad 3-5, Yoga and Advaita Vedanta). In waking, the *jiva* experiences the contact of his senses with their objects; in dreaming, such contacts are imagined but found on waking to be unreal; and in the third, deep sleep, all contacts with the world of the senses are withdrawn.

Three cities: see Tripurasura.

Three fires: threefold fire: Three burnings or fevers: these are the threefold causes of misery (Samkhya), proceeding from extrinsic causes, such as other beings and objects; proceeding from intrinsic causes, such as disorders

of the body or mind; and those proceeding from supernatural causes.

Three-head: a demon with three heads, a brother of Ravana, who was killed by Rama in the Dandaka forest.

Three kinds of sin: i.e., in mind, speech or deed.

Three qualities or *gunas*: these are constituents of Prakriti, or nature (Samkhya), light or good, active or fiery, and dark or dull and gloomy (see *Bhagavad-gita* xiv. 5-20).

Three worlds: heaven, earth and hell

Thunderbolt: *Vajra* (Skt.): one of the forty-eight signs on Vishnu's feet.

Tilak: a mark made on the forehead as either sign of affiliation to sect, or for ornament.

Tortoise: an incarnation of Vishnu at the time of churning of the ocean, the *Kashyapa*.

Tree, the: Once Kubera's sons Nala-kubera and Manigriva were impolite to Narada and were cursed that they should become trees. Both went to Gokula, turned into Arjuna-trees. Once when Krishna's mother Yashoda punished him for some childish prank by tying him to the twin-trees, Krishna uprooted it and they were restored to the Yakshas they were (*Bhagavata Purana* X)

Triple disorder: disorders of the three humours of the body, the phlegm, bile and wind.

Tripurasura: a demon slain by Shiva; he had been given three cities as a boon; according to another version, the three cities were destroyed by Shiva with a single arrow (MBH 8. 24)

Ugrasena: father of Kansa, and king of Mathura. He was deposed by his son and again set on the throne by Krishna after Kansa's death; Krishna became his doorkeeper.

Uma: see Bhavani.

Urmila; Sita's sister and Lakshmana's wife.

Vaidarbhi: daughter of Vidarbha, Rukmini, Krishna's wife.

Vaidehi: see Sita.

300 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

Vaikuntha: the heaven of Vishnu,

Valmiki: a sage, author of the *Ramayana*, also referred to as the first of poets and lord of sages. In his early days, Valmiki was a hunter and a robber who received enlightenment by repeating Rama's Name in its inverted form, instructed by Narada.

Vamadeva: see Shiva.

Vanir reeds: a kind of cane or reeds, *Calamus rotang*.

Varuna: one of the Vedic gods, lord of the waters and of law-enforcement, etc.

Varunā: a small stream, one of the two tributaries of the Ganga at Banaras, which is said to have given the city its name (Varuna Asi) Varanasi. Asi is where Tulsidasa lived and died too.

Vasus: an order of deities, eight in number, attendant upon Indra.

Veda: there are four Vedas, together the most sacred and ancient holy texts: *Rgveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Samaveda*; the latest is *Atharvaveda*.

I have followed Sri Aurobindo in writing Veda, instead of Vedas.

Veda garbha: name of Brahma, the Creator to whom it came first.

Vedangas: the six ancillary limbs of the Veda: phonetics, metrics, grammar, etymology, astronomy, and religious observances.

Vedanta: one of the six Indian systems of thought, or *Darsanas*, arising from the enquiries into the ultimate principle or self of the Upanishads. Founded by Badarayana around the beginning of the Christian era and perfected by Shankaracharya (eighth or ninth century A.D.) Ramanuja and Madhva were responsible for important modifications of Advaita Vedanta.

Vetala: a kind of ghost, attendant upon Shiva.

Vibhishana: A demon, younger brother of Ravana, who sought Rama's refuge and after Ravana's death was installed

upon the throne of Srilanka. An example of Rama's extreme forgiveness to those who come to him seeking asylum.

Vidhi: see Brahma.

Vidura: the younger brother of king Dhritarastra whose mother was a slave woman. He was a wise man, and a devotee of Krishna.

Vinayaka: see Ganesha.

Vindhya mountains: a range of hills which extends eastwards from the west coast across central India, ending to the south of Banaras. The hills were the home of forest tribes and through them Rama and Sita wandered when they went into exile.

Viradha: a demon follower of Ravana, slain by Lakshmana.

Viranchi: see Brahma.

Vishnu: second god of the Hindu triad, with Brahma and Shiva, regarded as the preserver and maintainer of the universe. Through his many incarnations he became, with Shiva, the most widely worshipped deity in medieval Hindu world. Already in the MBH. Vishnu is given a thousand names. In the Puranas, he is recognized in ten incarnations (see below, Vishnu, incarnations). Husband of Lakshmi, often called the Lord of Sri. His weapons include the discus (Chakra), he is also called *cakrapani*, disc-bearer and the bow Saranga; his mount is the Serpent-eagle, Garuda, lord of birds. Other names recurrent in the *Vinaya-patrika* are *Hari*, *Keshava*, *Govinda*, *Gopal*, *Murari*, *Narayan*, *Madhava*, *Bindu Madhava*, *Goswami*, *Rishikesa*, *Mukunda*, Lord of Vaikuntha, etc. Vishnu is said to be sleeping upon a couch made by the thousand-headed serpent Shesha, or Ananta, on the waters, and to have dreamed of the creation of the universe while there. In times of great crisis, he is appealed to by the gods to save them, or incarnate himself in human form to deliver the Earth of her burden of evil since he is the preserver.

Vishnu (Incarnations): the ten incarnations of Vishnu are: the Fish (*Matsya*), the Boar (*Varaha*), the Tortoise (*Kashyapa*), the Man-lion (*Nrisimha*), the Dwarf (*Vamana*),

Parashu-Rama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki at the end of Kali-yuga. The Fish: Manu discovered a small fish which prophesied to him that it would save him from a universal flood. Manu constructed an ark and attached it to the Fish's side as it grew to giant proportions. Manu was saved and led the new creation (*Shat-patha Brahman*). The Boar: the incarnate form of the Boar rescued the earth when she was lost in the boundless dark waters. The Tortoise: The Tortoise acted as the pivot for mount Mandāra at the churning of the ocean. The other incarnations are described under their names. Kalki: the tenth and final incarnation is still to come: Vishnu is to appear on a white horse at the end of present age, to destroy the wicked and restore the good people.

Vishnuyashā: the father of Kalki, a brahman.

Visvamitra: Rishi who appears in the *Ramayana* as the guardian and instructor of Rama and Lakshmana when the youth are entrusted to him by king Dasharatha. Also referred to as Kaushika.

Braja: the region around Mathura and Agra where Krishna spent his youth; a pastoral country.

Vritra (Vritrasura): a demon who made war on Indra and was eventually slain by him, with *Vajra*, thunderbolt, made out of the Rishi Dadhichi's bones. Vritra was a devotee of Vishnu.

Vulture: Jatayu, who witnessed Sita's abduction by Ravana, and gave his life trying to save her. Rama later came on the dying bird and was told what had happened, he thereupon performed his obsequies and gave him a place in his own heaven.

Washerman: The story of the washerman of Ayodhya is sufficiently ancient; it also appears in *Padma Purana*, Patala Khanda, 56-7.

Wish-granting cow: Wishing cow: *Kamadhenu* was one of the eighteen treasures produced at the churning of the ocean. She was said to fulfil whatever wishes were made to her. •

Wishing-jewel: see Chintamani.

Wishing-tree, Wish-granting tree: this tree, *Kalpa Taru* was one of the five heavenly trees in Indra's heaven; like the Wishing Cow, *Kamadhenu*, it granted all desires. Tulsidasa calls it the tree of the gods, too.

World-guardians: the eight world-guardians, *Lokapalas* were the deities who presided over the eight quarters of the compass (see Ten Quarters, above): they are Indra, Agni, Yama, Surya, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, and Soma.

Yajur-Veda: the second of the four Vedas, composed mainly from the hymns of the Rigveda, modified for liturgical purposes and use in the performance of sacrifices.

Yaksha: a class of supernatural beings, a sort of goblins; Kubera is said to be the king of the Yakshas.

Yama: the god of death, hence also known as the lord of death. Later regarded as one of the world-guardians.

Yamuna: the river Yamuna, or Jumna, principal tributary of the Ganga and scene of Krishna's early exploits, etc.

Yashoda: wife of the cowherd Nanda of Gokul, foster-mother of Krishna. Also called *Yasumati*.

Yavana: see note 106.

Yoga: one of the systems of Indian philosophy, systematised by Patanjali (second century B.C.) and based on the Samkhya system, teaching the means whereby the individual may achieve union (yoga) with the universal soul, *jiva* with the Brahman. Its classic enunciation is in eight (*Astanga yoga*), restraint (*yama*) discipline (*niyama*), postures (*asana*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*) control of the senses (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhāranā*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and finally supersensory trance-like state (Samadhi). See also Hatha Yoga

Yogi: one who practises or has achieved yoga, or union with the supreme being.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

References are to hymn and line numbers, e.g., 12.17 refers to hymn number 12, line number 17. In general, any proper name which is not to be found in the Notes will be found in the Glossary.

2.13: *with a cripple for a charioteer*: According to the Puranas, Surya, the sun, has a chariot drawn by seven horses. His charioteer is *Aruna*, the rosy dawn, who is also named *Anuru*, thighless. Hence the tradition of his being lame.

2.14: *You, Lord, are the very image of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva*: Surya is said to be Brahma at the time of his rising, Shiva at midday, and Vishnu at his setting, thus representing all three (*The Bhavisya Purana*).

3.6: *In the deadly fury of the fire of the poison*, Kālakūta: An episode from the story of the churning of the ocean, when the first object to emerge was the burning poison Kālakūta, which would have consumed the entire creation including the gods themselves, but Shiva drank it.

4.4: *Who struck down the Love-god*: Kamadeva, the god of love, Rati's husband, was reduced to ashes by Shiva, 'Love's foe', opening his third eye after Kama had struck him with a flowery dart and brought him under love's sway (*Matsya Purana* 154. 227-55) (Vi 4. 14, 15, etc.)

4.9-10: *Shiva's city*: Banaras, or Kasi whose presiding deity is Shiva himself; it is commonly held that all creatures who die in Banaras attain thereby liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

5.1: *'O Bhavani, your lord is mad!'*: Brahma, seeing Shiva's unrestrained openhandedness, became worried and

approached Parvati, his wife, to ask her to use her influence to restrain her husband.

7.6: Gunanidhi, though a brahman, was a notorious thief, and went one night to a temple intending to steal the bell, which was so high that to reach it, he had to climb on the image of Shiva. Unexpectedly, Shiva was pleased by this act, and appeared before him, offering whatever boon he desired. Thus the brahman Gunanidhi gained a place in Shiva's own heaven.

8.15-16: *For these stupid ones want/To crush this plant Tulsi:* There is a pun here involving the poet's name and the Tulsi plant, the holy basil, which is a small shrub specially venerated by Vaishnavas; it is often planted in a raised pedestal, in courtyards of houses.

10.11: *Half your body is the daughter of the mountain, Parvati:* A reference to Shiva and Parvati as *Ardhanarisvara* in which the deity's body is vertically divided, one half being male and the other female, symbolizing the union of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*.

11: *Bhairava:* The terrific form of Shiva; he is also said to be the superintendent of Banaras (*kotwal*).

12.7: Being-Consciousness-Bliss, *Satchidananda*, from the Upanishadic times a term used to describe the Brahman. In Shaiva philosophy, the highest principle is pure and universal consciousness, *Chaitanya*, and is defined in terms of three aspects.

15-16: The Goddess: Shiva's wife born in the Himalayas hence her name Parvati, the mountain maiden (3), Girija (6); she has many other names, Uma (4) lit. light, Gauri, the fair one, and Devi. She has too a terrible aspect known as Durga, Kali or Kalika, the Black, (16, 17, 128). She is Shiva's *Shakti* or female energy, her mount is the lion, and she is the mother of Ganesha and of Kartikeya. (Vi, 15-16).

22: Lolarka, Trilochana, Karnaghanta, Manikarnika, Panchaganga: These are all famous shrines associated with Shiva and Vishnu in Banaras, points visited by pilgrims to

the city. Pancha-Kosi, or the Five League Way, is the name given to the circuit route followed by the pilgrims.

22: *Her five life-breaths are the five-lettered 'Namah Shivaya':* the most celebrated of all prayers to Shiva.

22: Bindu-Madhava: see below Note 61

23-24: Chitrakuta: name of a hill in Banda district in U.P. celebrated as a place of pilgrimage; the seat of Valmiki's hermitage where Rama, Sita and Lakshmana stayed during their wanderings in exile (Vi 23, 43, etc.) See Note 264 also.

24.13: *Go to Chitrakuta then and repeat the mantra, the Name:* The prayer here is the Rama-mantra, or sacred Name of Rama.

25-36: Hanuman, warrior who assisted Rama in his search for Sita and played a leading role in her recovery. Son of Anjana and Kesari, but his real father was Vayu, the Wind-god, thus he is known as Son of Wind too. For his childhood exploits and gaining supernatural powers, see Notes 25.2. Owing to his services to Rama he is often called Rama's messenger, and as such he plays an intermediary role between Rama and his devotees. This is specially true in case of the poet himself.

25.8: *Hail, as a young monkey you devoured in eager play the rising sun's disc:* Valmiki (*Ramayana*, Uttara Kanda 25-6) tells how the infant Vanara left temporarily by his mother mistook the rising sun for a flower or fruit and tried to catch hold of it. It happened to be a day on which an eclipse was due to take place and Rahu, finding Hanuman safely placed in the sun's chariot, went to complain to Indra, the lord of the gods, about this interference. Indra came to see, but Rahu reached the chariot before him whereupon Hanuman took him for a fruit and made to eat him. He made similar attempt next at Indra's elephant. Thereupon Indra struck him upon the jaw with his *vajra*, and Hanuman fell to earth senseless. This incident led to the gods giving Hanuman various boons and *Siddhis*.

26.5: Aditi and Kashyapa: Aditi, known as the mother of gods, is said to have been Kashyapa's wife and mother

of both Indra and Vishnu in his Vamana or Dwarf incarnation. Here the poet compares Hanuman's Vanara-parents to Aditi and Kashyapa.

26.26: After his feats described above in 25.2, the gods bestowed boons on Hanuman through which he acquired special skills and powers (Valmiki *Ramayana*, Uttara Kanda, 36)

27.5: *Hail, the home of delight of Wind-god and Anjana*: Tradition has it that the wind-god, Vayu, once saw Kesari's wife adorning herself and became enamoured of her. As a result of their union, Hanuman was conceived.

27.9: *Hail, the Rudras' leader, first among the world's adored ones* Hanuman is sometimes referred to as the eleventh Rudra: the story goes that Shiva once asked Vishnu to let him act as his servant, Rama agreed that he might do so and during the Rama incarnation, Shiva was born as Hanuman.

28.3: *Bhima, Arjuna and Garuda*: The first two episodes are from the *Mahabharata* (Va na Parva 145-149) and the third in the *Skanda Purana*: 1) Bhima once asked Hanuman to show him the terrific form he had displayed while fighting Ravana, but when he did so, even the brave Bhima took fright. ii) Arjuna is famous for the banner on his chariot, which bore the device of a monkey. In this incident, Krishna his charioteer caused the monkey to leave the banner, thus reducing Arjuna's strength. Later Krishna explained to him that the monkey was in fact Hanuman himself. (iii) Once Vishnu ordered Garuda his mount to summon Hanuman. In response Hanuman lagged behind, but when Garuda reached the Lord, he found that Hanuman had already arrived. Thereby Garuda's pride in his speed was humbled.

28.17: *Sampāti*: Valmiki tells the vulture Sampati's story (Kiskindha Kanda, 58, 59) He was brother of the vulture Jatayu who was slain by Ravana when he attempted to come to Sita's aid after her abduction; on account of Jatayu's death he informed the monkey army of Sita's whereabouts. His wings and eyes had been burnt by the sun when in his pride he had approached too near, and after his services to the monkeys, Hanuman restored his wings and eyesight.

29.10: *Expert in great drama, crest-mark of a million poets:* According to tradition, Hanuman composed the dramatic work *Hanumannataka* on the Rama story. The existing drama, the *Mahanataka*, however, was compiled by one Damodar Misra in the tenth-eleventh centuries.

31.11: *Whose chin crushed to powder the hard Vajra's teeth:* One of Hanuman's exploits as a Vanara-boy (See 25.2)

32.5: *Like some young one of a lion's, I'd be devoured by a mere frog:* An example of the *Sandha-bhasa* often used: the frog is symbolic of the Kali-Yuga, Hanuman the parent-like lion-guardian, and Tulsidasa himself stands for the cub being protected.

39.3: *You the King's shoes' regent, the supreme protector of the kingdom:* After Rama had gone into exile, his half-brother who had been installed as regent in Ayodhya, Followed him to Chitrakuta to ask him to return; Rama refused. but at their parting he presented Bharata with a pair of his sandals which he took with great devotion; upon his return to Avadh installed them as a symbol of the absent king. (*Ramacharitamanasa*, Ayodhya Kanda 315-325)

39.12: *Sanjivani:* The episode of the life-giving *Sanjivani* herb given to Lakshmana during the Rama-Ravana War is described in the *Ramacharitamanasa* (Lanka Kanda, 55-59).

43.9: *Ahalya*, see glossary

43.16: *Indra's son, Jayanta, as the crow, his act's reward:* The crow was Jayanta in disguise. He caught sight of Sita, approached and touched her breast.

43.18: *The demoness in disguise:* see glossary, Surpanakha.

43.23: *Jatayu*, see glossary

45.28: *Ravana's younger brother:* see glossary, Vibhishana

45: This hymn is very popular. Ramanandi Vaishnavas always sing it at *ārati*.

47.1: *ārati:* both 47 and 48 are descriptions of the ceremony of *arati* which has six elements: incense smoke, the lamp or lamps in a holder, the offerings, betel leaves, the act of passing it round the image, and the preparation

of the bed for the Lord's repose. The poet gives each of these acts a symbolic meaning in 47.

48.15: *Buffalo-demon*: see glossary. Here the poet compares pride to Mahisasura, and the *arati* to the goddess Kali who slays him.

49: The Hari-Shankari hymn: This hymn is so-called as every verse is equally divided, the first half to Vishnu and the second to Shiva through which the poet emphasises the ultimate unity of Vishnu and Shiva.

49.9: *Manifested as the Dwarf*: The Vamana incarnation of Vishnu, see glossary.

49.26: *Sindhu's son*: Sindhu's son, Jalandhara, a demon-king who brought all the gods under his control. Shiva tried to slay him, but failed owing to his wife Vrinda's faithfulness. Vishnu then seduced her and thereafter Shiva was able to destroy him. Vrinda cursed Vishnu that her husband would be reborn as Ravana and steal away his wife in his Rama incarnation.

50.5: *The One from whose navel the creation springs*: When Vishnu lay sleeping on the Shesha upon the waters before creation, he dreamed and a lotus sprang from his navel; from it the universe was created.

15.17: *With a lovely Sri-Vatsa mark on your chest*: An emblem associated with Vishnu and his incarnations.

51.29: *Whose lotus-feet are adorned with the thunderbolt*: the first of twenty-four auspicious signs on the sole of Vishnu's right foot,

52: The hymn recalls Vishnu's ten incarnations. See glossary

52.11: *the ocean's churning*: see glossary. The Tortoise incarnation is described by *Vishnu-Purana*.

52.32: *the Incarnation of the compassionate Buddha*: of.

The *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva (c.A.D. 1200) where the Buddha also occurs as an incarnation of Vishnu as a decoy to mislead the evil. The inclusion of the Buddha is older, in Ksemendra's *Dashavatara Charitra* (c A.D. 1050) and in *Matsya Purana* 47-46.

310 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

52.37: the darkness spread by the Yavanas: the poet clearly associated Kali-Yuga with his own times and the *Yavanas* he speaks of here are most likely the Muslim invaders, and rulers.

54: *Nature, primal element, the five senses*: In this and the following hymns, the poet uses many technical terms as epithets of Vishnu or Rama from other systems such as Sankhya.

54.14: *Like the thread in cloth*: philosophical example taken from the Vedanta system, see glossary.

56.7: *You mightly upholder of the mountain*: This refers to Krishna's miracle of Govardhana when he lifted up the hill to shelter the people of Braja from Indra's rain-storm.

57: *the company of saints*: The qualities and importance of the group of saintly people in the Vaishnavite life of devotion is a recurrent theme of Tulsidasa.

57.11-12: *Vritra, Bali, Bana, Prahlada, the demon Maya* etc.: see glossary

57.27: *Viyogi Hari* identifies this as a reference to a verse in the *Bhagavata Purana* (Skandha 10).

59.27-28: *The river that flows through the forest of existence*: A favourite term for *Samsara*, the cycle of births, it is very old, going back to the *Mahabharata* (XII 290.61-68).

59.29: *Crocodiles of the six evil foes*: see glossary, six adversaries.

60.1: *Nara and Narayana*: Narayana is one the most ancient forms of Vishnu, the one 'moving upon the waters' at the time of creation.

60.15: *Markandeya, the best among sages*: A famous sage who was granted a boon by Vishnu and asked to be shown the destruction of the universe at the end of an aeon. He was shown the universe as vast primeval waters, with Narayana alone as a baby smiling and playing, licking his thumb, upon a banyan tree leaf floating upon the waters.

60.: *Badarika Ashram*: A famous pilgrim spot up in the Himalayas (mod. Badrinath) where Vishnu as Nara-Narayana did *tapasya*.

61: Bindu-Madhava: A form of Vishnu at Banaras venerated by Tulsidasa, also mentioned by Nabhadāsa and his commentator Priyadāsa.

62.16: *The mark of Bhrigu's foot on his great chest*: see glossary, Bhrigu

65.3: *As the rain-bird on the fresh clouds*: See glossary, Chataka bird

67.7: *Snake the jewel, the serpent grows restless etc.*: According to traditional belief, some special snakes have a jewel set in their skull; it is an antidote to its poison. It is also believed to emit a light and if it is removed the snake is blinded.

68.5: *three worlds and three ages*: see glossary

70.4: *Kali-age*: see glossary, kali-yuga.

75.8: *It's as the give and take of dog and elephant*; Probably this recalls the *Hitopadesa* fable of the jackal and the elephant: The jackal lures the elephant by offers of royal power and leads him into a bog. He then offers his tail to pull him out, but in the end the elephant is devoured by other jackals.

75.14: *The Sābara spell*: The spell gives control over all snakes, but if anyone is foolish enough to lie about his knowing the spell, and then to enter among snakes, he must be prepared to take the consequences.

75.45: *betel leaf*: Its presentation is a mark of respect to guests and a token of reconciliation.

76.1: The verse is autobiographical as the poet's name was Rambola before he entered the Ramanandi Order. The reference in 76.15 is to his Guru in real life, Naraharidasa. The name Rambola also occurs in *Kabitavali* (V, VII. 100).

78.5: *The stone, the beast, the tree, the bird*: see glossary under Ahalya, beast, tree, Jatayu.

80.5: *Chakor-bird*: see glossary

83.6: *the elephant*: see glossary

86: *Words Spoken by Suniti to her son Dhruva*: see Glossary, Dhruva. King Uttanapada had two wives, Suruchi and Suniti, both had sons. One day the king had taken Uttam, the son

312 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

of Suruchi his favourite, on his lap. Dhruva came up and asked to be allowed to join him there; his step-mother chided him saying that he did not deserve to sit upon the king's lap. Dhruva ran weeping to his mother who comforted him with these words.

86.12: *six snakes*: see glossary

88.12: *Discrimination* or *Viveka*: see glossary

90.7: *As a stupid hawk*: the mirror-polished floor became more common during Mughal times when a new process of polishing plaster came into vogue.

90.14-15: *I seek refuge with a frog to rid myself from fear/ Forgetting the eagle-riding Lord*: Another example of the *Sandha-bhasa*, or oblique language in which writings of Kabiradasa and Gorakh Nath abound.

93.8: *Prahlada*: see glossary

93.11-12: *Arjuna's wife*: see glossary, *Draupadi*

94. 8-9: *With the bird, with the prostitute etc.*: see glossary. The reference here is to a feast where participants are seated on the ground in rows and food is served to them on leaf-plates.

96.10: The brahman *Ajamila*: see glossary, *Ajamila*

97.3: *The hostility of Indra, Duryodhana and Bali*: Once Narada brought from heaven the *parijata* flower and presented it to Rukmini, Krishna's wife. Satyabhama, the second wife, became jealous and so Krishna too went to Indra's heaven and fought with him so as to bring back with him the whole *parijata* tree for her. For Duryodhana and Bali, see glossary.

97.6: Cowherd's home in Braja: Krishna was taken from Kansa's prison where he was born to the home of Nanda, cowherd-chief at Gokul in the country of Braja for protection where he was brought up as Nanda's son.

98.6: Krishna's foster-mother Yashoda once had to tie her child up to two trees to restrain him (See 78. above and glossary, tree)

98.9: *Him the cowherd women made to dance*: The gopis of Braja intoxicated with their love for Krishna, made him join in the circular Rās dance.

98.13: *Bali*, see glossary

98.18: *Ambarisa*: see glossary.

98.26: *Ugrasena*: Kansa's father, king of Mathura, was deposed by his son, and reinstated after Kansa's death, and made Krishna his doorkeeper.

100.4: *The stone*: see glossary, Ahalya.

100.21: *The king*,: Dasharatha, Rama's father, who was forced to send Rama into exile on the very day he was going to be crowned.

106.4: *The boatman*: see glossary

106.12: *Vajapeya*: one of seven forms of Soma sacrifice offered by kings or brahmans aspiring to the highest attainments.

106.13: *Vidura*, son of a brahman by a slave-girl (*Mahabharata*) *Kubja*, Kansa's slave-girl who became Krishna's devotee and was beloved by him. For *Sabari*, see glossary.

108.4: *The bija-mantra*: lit. seed prayer, it is the central formula taught at the initiation of an aspirant. For Tulsidasa, it is the Name of Rama.

111: This verse is one of the most philosophical in the work: in the twelfth line, the poet sets forth three divergent views of the visible world: that the world is real and true, as the Dualists, Qualified Dualists and Purva-Mimamsakas maintain; that it is false and unreal as the Advaita Vedantists claim; or that it is both these together, as the followers of the Yoga school or Nimbarka maintain. But finally Tulsidasa gives his own view, that love must be the basis upon which belief is founded. However, Tulsidasa as a philosopher belongs to the Vishistadvaita school followed by Ramanandi Vaishnavas.

125.10: *these highwaymen*: see glossary, six adversaries

125: Cf. Guru Nanak (*Adi Grantha*, 14. p. 155) where a similar set of metaphors is used.

128: 8: *Like the notorious demon, Raktabija!* When the demon Raktabija was attacked by the goddess Kali, the drops of blood which fell to the ground from his body were instantly turned into demons like himself. To counter this, Kali had finally to increase the length of her tongue so as to catch the drops before they fell (*Devi Mahatmya*).

129.6: *Weaving a rope of dust-particles to blind the masterful elephant of existence:* an impossible task. Cf. George Herbert's 'rope of sands'.

130: *Who ever gained mango-fruits by sowing seeds of babul?* a popular folk-saying.

133.8: *The Lord as herdsman:* this is an ancient Indian concept of the Divine as in *Pasupati*, a name of Shiva from Vedic times.

133.13: *Who ever found ghee by churning mirage-waters?:* Wasting labour on what is impossible.

134. *Visvamisra, the sage's wife, Janaka:* see glossary, Visvamisra, Ahalya, Janaka.

136.v. 3: *The Lord with the discus in his hand:* Lord Vishnu who can cut through the meshes of existence and rebirth which bind the *jiva*

139: This hymn is an important one as it describes the conditions of the age (*Kali-Yuga*) in which the poet lived.

139.13: *Dharma of the four orders and the four estates:* see glossary, Dharma.

139.10: Rama's rule: *Rama Rajya*, the ideal state of society as opposed to *Kali-Yuga*. In Valmiki's *Ramayana* and later versions, it is the state of society attained in Avadha (Ayodhya) after the defeat of Ravana, and the establishment of Rama's rule.

142.6: *moth and lamp:* an ancient Indian poetic image, Asvaghosh (*Buddha-Charita*, xi, 35), Kalidasa (*Kumsarasambhava*, iv.40) and the *Bhagavad-Gita* (xi.29)

146.14: *The dispute of the bird and the dog:* The dispute of the birds is a reference to the story (Valmiki's *Ramayana*) of an owl who lived with a vulture in the forest; after a quarrel about their home, they both went to Rama, asking for justice.

The story of the dog is found in Keshavadasa (*Ramachandrika*) and also in the spurious eighth Lavakusa Kanda (*Ramacharitamansa*): A dog once entered Rama's court weeping and told that a certain brahman had struck him for no reason, asking for justice. On being called and questioned, the brahman said that the dog had obstructed his path and so he had struck him. Rama next asked the dog what punishment should be given to him, and the dog asked the king to make the man the head of a monastery.

151.22: *That it could make a sage out of a hunter!*: The hunter Ratnakar could not pronounce 'Rama' as Narada had taught him after he was reformed, so he went on reciting 'Mārā, Māra', and gained enlightenment through the Name's power, even in this inverted form, and was transformed into Valmiki, the first among poets.

152.4: *When Brahma and other gods told Earth's anguish*: This hymn is a summary version of the Rama story which begins with the occasion when the gods approached and entreated Vishnu to take incarnation to lighten the Earth's burden of woes.

154.5: O You swan upon the *Manasa-lake* of Shiva's love: The lake Manasa-sarovar after which Tulsidsasa named his version of the Ramayana, *Ramcharitamansa*, lies in the Tibet region of the Himalayas, and the river Sarayu flows from it. Along with the Mount Kailas, it is a place of pilgrimage particularly sacred to Shiva.

159.9: *Just as the rabbit served the jackal to gain the lion's praise*: Viyogi Hari says that just as the rabbit, through the strength of the jackal, wishes to praise the lion, and to show his bravery in helping to lay low the lordly elephant: but how can all this be when the jackal is about to eat him?

165.15: *While you let your subject the washerman live in your capital/Even though he stupidly cavilled at your own wife*: The episode of the washerman (Valmiki's *Ramayana*) tells how after his return to the city and establishment of Rama's rule there, a washerman turned his wife out of the house, as a result of some act of infidelity, saying: 'I will not keep

316 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

you. I'm not Rama who took back his wife after she had been for so long in the hands of the demon Ravana!' As a result, Rama sent Sita to dwell in a forest hermitage where her two sons, Lava and Kusha, were born.

169.1: *nine sentiments, six tastes*: see glossary.

170.22: *Visiting the resorts of Rama and Sita*: The various pilgrim places associated with the Rama story, such as Ayodhya, Chitrakuta etc.

174.5: *Bali left his teacher*: When Vishnu came to Bali disguised as a Dwarf (Vamana incarnation), his teacher Shukra tried to dissuade him from honouring his promise, but Bali insisted upon doing so, against his teacher's advice, thereby losing all his dominions.

174.5: *The women of Braja their husbands*: The wives of the cowherds of Braja left their husbands to dance with Krishna in the forest of Vrindavana.

175.11: *Indrayana fruit*: see glossary

188: This hymn is addressed to *samsara* or *Maya*, and like 111, it shows how Tulsidasa reconciles the standpoint of Advaita Vedanta with that of a devotee. The snake-like rope and the coreless banana tree are both illustrations of the nature of *Maya*.

188.13: *Nanda's son*: Tulsidasa here makes no distinction between Vishnu's incarnations as Rama and Krishna even though his own particular predilection was towards Rama.

189: This hymn has several words and idioms racy of the soil of Avadha, with a complicated imagery of the soul's journey, which has been analysed by commentators, but perhaps it is better to let the poet's words explain themselves.

191.5-6. Commentators have given examples of how each one of the statements is true: *Sound is merciless*—the deer is lured with the sweet music of vina so that it can be ensnared; *fire uniform in conduct*—it consumes any wretched moth drawn to its flame; *water is warrior in love*—fish cannot live without it, but it does nothing to save the fish if it leaps out into the air; the *moon's diseased*—its face is pock-

marked, but it does not attempt to save the chakor-bird; *the sun is too great*—the lotus blossoms to see its rays, but it merely burns up its blossoms when it has risen higher. *The cloud too cruel for love's way*: see glossary, chatak-bird. All these are well-known examples.

197.4: Traditionally, the moon bears the mark of a deer on its face; this deer is said to reside in her. The moon is also the source of Soma or elixir and this deer can imbibe Soma to its heart's content. How should a creature who knows the true elixir be contented with mirage waters, created by the sun's rays? In both Sanskrit and Hindi the common name for mirage is *mrigatrishna*, lit. deer-thirst, a thirst which can never be satisfied.

197.4: *Thousand-armed* is Kartavirya Sahasrarjuna. King of Mahismati, who was killed by Parashurama.: *the ten-headed* is Ravana.

200.1: Here the contraction between the actual impermanence of the body and the deluded pride of the individual who thinks and acts as if it were as permanent as a copper statue.

202.4: *The tree of existence*: an ancient and recurrent image going back to the Vedic times and recurrent in the Upanishads.

203: This genre of hymn, setting out the fifteen days of the waxing moon as fifteen separate acts of devotion is common in the literature of the time, Cf. in Kabir and Gorakh Nath.

203.10: *three gunas*: see glossary

203.18: *six enemies*: see glossary

203.20: *seven constituents*: see glossary

203.22: *eightfold nature*: see glossary

203.24: *City of nine doors*: The human body with its nine principal apertures is likened to a city. An ancient image (Atharva Veda 10.2.31) and Upanishads.

203.27: *ten faculties*: see glossary

203.29: *The One with the Sarang bow in His hands!*: i.e. Vishnu, and so Rama.

318 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

203.34: *three conditions*: see glossary

203.36: *the fourteen worlds*: see glossary

204.4: *pair of opposites*: see glossary

208.9: *Nirvana*: This term is no doubt Buddhist in origin, but by Tulsidasa's time it was used like its other synonyms, without sectarian significance.

209.13: *the offering of life-breaths*: *Pranayama*

213.12: *King Nriga*: see glossary, *Nriga*

214.5: *Putana went to kill him*: see glossary, *Putana*

214.8: *love of the milkmaids*: the wives of the cowherds of Braja

214.11: *Shishupala*: see glossary

214.14: *The deluded huntsman struck him on the foot*: After the final destruction of the Yadavas, Krishna while sitting in meditation on the seashore at Prabhas, was shot by the huntsman, Jarā, by mistake.

220.11: *the jackal, having killed the frog, seeks hostility with the lion*: another example of *Sandha-bhasa*. cf. Kabir: 'Even the lion joins battle with the jackal. . . the frog and the snake dwell together, and the cat is wedded to the dog (Bijaka)

220.14: *Parikshita, dwelling happily in heaven* etc.: This refers to the story of King Parikshita's encounter with Kali-yuga as a black man driving a cow (Earth) and a lame bullock (Dharma, a cripple) and was about to smite him with his sword when he fell at his feet, begging for mercy, and the king let him go. See glossary, *Parikshita*.

220.19: *Like a lion disguised as a cow*: a popular maxim, or *Nyaya*: it means 'wolf in sheep's clothing', being the reverse of 'the ass in a tiger-skin' of the *Hitopadesa* (iii 3).

226-6-7: *Like to one gone blind in the month of Shravana/All colours appear to be only green!*: a popular maxim.

226.13: '*Asvatthama is dead!*': The Mahabharata episode how Drona's death was accomplished: When Arjuna desisted from slaying Drona his teacher, Krishna advised Bhima to kill an elephant named Asvatthama after Drona's only son.

When the rumour reached Drona that 'Asvatthama is dead!', he asked Yudhisthira! 'Do you mean the man or the elephant?' Yudhisthira replied: 'Asvatthama's been killed, the man or the elephant. 'But the last words were said in a voice so low that Drona could not hear them, and he swooned in sorrow, whereupon Dhristadyumna, his sworn enemy, came up and killed him (MBH. Drona Parva, 161-65).

226.15-16: *The monkey-army with built/A bridge of boulders over the ocean*: The monkeys who were siding Rama, built a bridge of stones across the ocean from the mainland to Srilanka., so that Rama and his army could cross over. The bridge survives to this day in the line of black rocks running across the straits, from Rameshwaram to Mannar, and is known as Adam's Bridge, or more anciently as the Setubandha, the Bridge.

229.9: *A water-spider in a whirlpool*: Another popular saying. Viyogi Hari says that a water-spider remains on the surface of the water and does not sink even in a disturbance. Likewise, says Tulsidasa, Kaliyuga has thrown me into the ocean of existence but through Rama's Name I do not sink.

233.2: In this land of karma: India is designated as *karmabhumi*, the land of karma, from ancient times, it occurs in *Vishnu-Purana*, *Matsya Purana*, 114, and in the *Mahabharata*, LLL. 261.35.

238.1: kabandhia: see glossary

239.4: *the birth of 'Pandu's sons*: the five sons of Pandu who play a leading role in the MBH, were reputed to have been born from the seed of five gods: Yudhisthira from Dharma, Bhima from Vayu, Arjuna from Indra, and Nakula and Sahadeva from the Asvinikumaras.

239.8: King Nriga: see glossary, Nriga

239.12-15: Parikshita, Namuchi: see glossary

240.11: *You bypassed Duryodhana's wealth*: Once Duryodhana invited Krishna in order to display his wealth, but Krishna went instead to his humble friend Vidura's house where he ate banana skins offered to him by Vidura's wife in her excitement.

320 / *The Vinaya Patrika an English Rendering*

240.4: *And let Arjuna know something of your ways:* The reference here is to Krishna's exposition of love in the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

241.5: *Now will Tulsidasa hang a puppet in your Name:* Viyogi Hari explains this verse thus: When a troop of mountebanks have performed and received no recompense, they make a puppet and hang it on a long bamboo, and parade it through the streets, saying: 'Here's a miser!' Thus they shame miserly persons into giving them something. Likewise Tulsidasa addresses Rama.

244.4: *Like to the stupid musk-deer:* cf, Kabir: 'Your Lord is within you, just as the perfume is in flowers, or with the musk-deer, but it again and again searches the grass'.

251.4: *Six schools of philosophy:* see glossary

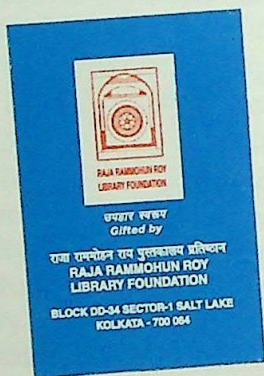
264. 22-23: *His act at Chitrakuta:* An episode from the poet's life: Tulsidasa had a vision of Hanuman and he asked the boon for a sight of Rama as King, and was asked to go to Chitrakuta, where he saw two comely princes, but missed marking them as Rama and Lakshmana (Priyadasa's Commentary on the *Bhakta Mala*), the verse would suggest that the incident had some actual, historical source.

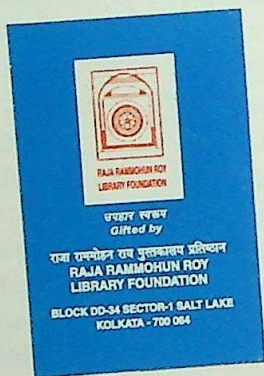
272.7: *Like a magic spell for the ague-fever is abandoned:* If anyone suffers from the tertiary ague, the folk remedy is to make a doll and put it in an earthen dish with various spices and flowers, etc. and to wave it over the sick man. It is then carried out at midnight to the crossroads and abandoned there. The bearer thereafter should never look back at it, or else the disease will be transferred to him.

275: This hymn has been accepted as having an autobiographical content.

275.7-8: *Cast my body away/As though it had been a wretched vermin:* Apparently a reference to the ill-omened hour of the poet's birth, which, according to astrological precept, ordained that his parents should abandon him without even setting eyes on him.









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